

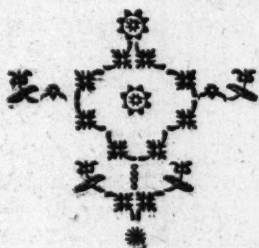
HENRIETTA.

1207. c. 4
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BY MRS. LENNOX.

Ramsay afterwards Lennox (C.)
K

IN TWO VOLUMES.



L O N D O N:

Printed for HARRISON and Co. N^o 18, Paternoster Row.

M DCC LXXXVII.

M. E. R. I. T. A.

MRS. L. H. H. H.

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Dedication to the Second Edition.

TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.

MADAM,

THE condescension and benignity with which your Grace has hitherto favoured my performances and attempts, have at last given me boldness enough to intreat your patronage for a little novel.

Those to whom this book is new, will expect the name of such a patroness to be followed by some work of deep research and elevated dignity; but they whose nearer approaches to your Grace, have enabled them to distinguish your private virtues, will not be disappointed when they find it recommended only by purity and innocence. To obtain the approbation of a judgment like yours, it is necessary to mean well; and, to gain kindness from such benevolence, to mean well is commonly sufficient.

Had your Grace resolved only to countenance those who could have enlarged your knowledge, or refined your sentiments, few could have aspired to the honour of your notice, and far had I been removed from all hope of the favours which I have enjoyed, and the expectations which I have been permitted to indulge. But true greatness is always accessible, and pride will never be confounded with dignity by those who remember that your Grace has admitted this address from,

MADAM,

Your Grace's most obliged,

And most devoted Servant,

CHARLOTTE LENNOX.

LONDON,
Nov. 20, 1760.

Edinburgh to the Second Edition

TO HIS GRACE

THE BUTCHER OF NEW CASTLE

M.DCCC.

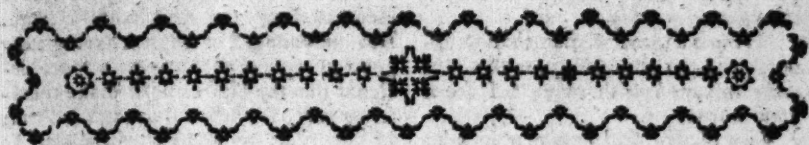
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been executed at the gallows of New Castle, from the year 1750 to the year 1800.

James Wilson, who was executed on the 1st of January 1750, for the murder of John Smith, a merchant of the town of Newcastle.

John Brown, who was executed on the 1st of February 1751, for the murder of William Black, a merchant of the town of Newcastle.

Thomas Green, who was executed on the 1st of March 1752, for the murder of Robert White, a merchant of the town of Newcastle.

James Black, who was executed on the 1st of April 1753, for the murder of John Brown, a merchant of the town of Newcastle.



H E N R I E T T A.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

WHICH INTRODUCES OUR HEROINE
TO THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE
READER IN NO VERY ADVANTA-
GEOUS SITUATION.



ABOUT the middle of July, 17—, when the Windsor stage-coach with the accustomed number of passengers was proceeding on its way to London, a young woman genteelly dressed, with a small parcel tied up in her handkerchief, hastily bolted from the shelter of a large tree near the road; and calling to the coachman to stop for a moment, asked him, if he could let her have a place. The man, although he well knew his vehicle was already sufficiently crowded, yet being desirous of appropriating this supernumerary fare to himself, replied, that he did not doubt but he could find room for her; and, jumping off his box, begged the company to sit close, and give the young woman a place.

‘What do you mean?’ said a jolly fat woman, with a face as red as scarlet; ‘Have you not got your usual number of passengers? Do you think we will be stifled with heat to put money into your pocket?’—‘There is room enough for such a slender young body as this,’ said the coachman, ‘if you would but sit closer.’

‘Sit closer!’ repeated the dame, and spreading her cloaths; ‘don’t you see we are crowded to death? How dare you pretend to impose another passenger upon us, when your coach is already full?’

‘Well,’ said a tall lean woman, who sat next her, ‘this is the first time I ever travelled in a stage-coach, and truly I am sick of it already. There is no bearing the insults one is exposed to in these carriages. Prithee, young woman,’ pursued she, with an air of great contempt, ‘go about your business, you see there is no room for you—And do you, fellow, get on your box, and drive on.’

‘Fellow me no fellows,’ said the coachman, in a surly tone, ‘I won’t drive till I please. Who are you, pray, that takes so much upon you to order me?’

‘Who am I, you saucy jack-a-napes,’ said the lady, ‘a person that—but I shall not demean myself so much as to tell you who I am: it is my misfortune to be stuffed up in a stage-coach at present—what I have never been used to, I assure you.’

‘Good lack-a-day!’ said the fat gentlewoman, with a sneer, ‘a great misfortune truly—I would have you to know, Madam, your betters ride in stage coaches. Here’s a coil indeed with such would-be-gentry!’

‘Good woman,’ said the other, with an affected calmness, ‘pray don’t direct your

‘your impertinent discourse to me; I have nothing to say to you.’

‘No more a good woman than yourself,’ said the plump lady, with a face doubly inflamed with rage; ‘I scorn your words.’

‘Very likely,’ said a grave man, who sat on the opposite side, ‘but I wish it was possible to make room for the young gentlewoman.’—‘Ah! God bless your honour,’ said the coachman, ‘I thought you could not find in your heart to let such a pretty young woman as this walk.’

‘Pretty!’ exclaimed the haughty lady, ‘you are a fine judge of beauty indeed!—But I will not submit to be crowded, fellow: so you and your pretty passenger may ride on the coach-box, if you please.’

‘Nay, since you come to that,’ says the fat gentlewoman, ‘I am resolved you shall not have your own way. The young woman may be as good as you; and she shall not be obliged to ride on the coach-box. So open the door, coachman,’ said she, shoving her antagonist at the same time with all her force; ‘here is room enough.’

A young gentlewoman in a riding-habit, who sat on the same side, but next the window, declared that she was willing to give part of her seat to the stranger; and begged the haughty lady to yield. ‘Poh!’ said the rosy matron, ‘don’t stand begging and praying her; since you are on my side, we will be too hard for her, I warrant you.’ Saying this, she put one of her huge arms round the young woman’s waist; and thus reinforced, shoved her neighbour so forcibly against the other window, that she cried out with pain and vexation.

The young lady without, who had been the occasion of this contest, and who had hitherto stood silent, with her hat over her eyes, alarmed by the screams of her foe, raised her head; and in a tone of voice so sweet, as immediately fixed the attention of the whole company, intreated them not to quarrel upon her account: It was indeed, she said, of great consequence to her to be admitted, but she would not continue to desire it, since her request had produced so much uneasiness among them.

The passengers who occupied the other side of the coach, were two men and a woman big with child; which circumstance had made it impossible for the men

to offer her a seat with them, for fear of incommoding the pregnant woman. But the youngest of the men having now got a glimpse of the stranger’s face, declared that the ladies might make themselves easy, for he would resign his seat; adding, that he was extremely glad he had an opportunity of obliging such a handsome lady. He then jumped out of the coach, and taking the stranger’s hand to help her in, stared confidently under her hat, which put her into a little confusion: however, she thanked him very politely, and accepted his offer; but not without expressing some concern for the manner in which he would dispose of himself.

‘Oh! Madam,’ said the coachman, ‘the gentleman may sit upon the box with me, and he will have the pleasure of viewing the beautiful prospects all the way we go.’—‘I shall see none so beautiful,’ said the young fellow, ‘as what they who remain in the coach will behold.’

The fair stranger now blushed more than before, and being willing to avoid any farther speeches of this sort, she hastily got into the coach, thanked the young man a second time, who having seen her seated, placed himself by the coachman on the box, and they proceeded on their journey.

CHAP. II.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF A VIOLENT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO YOUNG LADIES, WHICH HAS THE USUAL CONSEQUENCES, A COMMUNICATION OF SECRETS, BY WHICH THE READER IS LET INTO PART OF HENRIETTA’S STORY.

A Profound silence now prevailed among the company in the coach; the eyes of all were fastened upon the fair stranger, who appeared wholly insensible of the scrutinizing looks of her fellow-travellers. Something within herself seemed to engross all her thoughts; and although, by her eyes being constantly turned towards the windows of the coach, it might be imagined the passing objects drew her attention, yet their fixed looks too plainly indicated that they were beheld without observation. Her person, though full of charms, and the easy gracefulness of her air, im-

pressed

pressed less respect for her on the minds of the women, than the elegance of her morning-dress, which they were now at leisure to consider. Her gown was a white sprigged muslin, extremely fine, through which shone a rich blue Mantua silk petticoat; her cap, handkerchief, and ruffles, were trimmed with fine Brussels lace; her apron had a broad border round it of Dresden work; and a white lutestring hat shaded her charming face, which she was solicitous to conceal from view.

The melancholy with which she seemed oppressed, conciliated to her the goodwill of her female fellow-travellers, though from very different sentiments. The haughty lady, who had refused to let her have a place in the coach, found her envy and ill-nature insensibly subside, by the consideration that this stranger was probably more unhappy than herself.

The lusty matron, pleased that, by insisting upon receiving her, she had conferred an obligation on one who appeared to be of a rank above her own, enjoyed her present superiority, and pitied her from the overflowings of gratified pride.

The young lady in the riding-habit, whose vanity had been a little mortified at seeing herself associated in a journey with persons whom she conceived to be very unfit company for her, thought herself very happy in the acquisition of so genteel a fellow-traveller; and as she had not deigned to open her mouth before, from an opinion of the meanness of her company, she now made herself amends for her silence, by addressing a profusion of civil speeches to the fair stranger, who replied to every thing she said with extreme politeness, but with an air that shewed her heart was not at ease.

The passengers being set down at different places, Miss Courteney, for that was the name of our fair adventurer, remained alone with the young lady in the coach. This circumstance seemed to rouse her from a deep reverie, in which she had been wholly absorbed during the last half hour; and looking earnestly at her companion—'Ah! Madam,' said she, in a most affecting accent, 'and when am I to lose you?'—'I shall leave you in a few minutes,' said the lady; 'for I am going no farther than Hammer-smith.'—'Lord bless me!' said Miss Courteney, lifting up her fine

eyes swimming in tears, 'what shall I do? what will become of me?'

This exclamation gave great surprize to the other lady, who from several circumstances had conceived that there was some mystery in her case. 'You seem uneasy,' said she to Miss Courteney; 'pray let me know if it is in my power to serve you.'

This kind request had such an effect on the tender heart of Miss Courteney, that she burst into tears, and for a few moments was unable to answer; when the lady pressing her to speak freely—'I am an unhappy creature, Madam,' said she, sighing; 'and am flying from the only person in the world upon whom I have any dependence. I will make no scruple to trust you with my secret. Did you ever hear of Lady Meadows,' pursued she, 'the widow of Sir John Meadows?'

'I know a lady who is acquainted with her,' said the other; 'she is a woman of fashion and fortune.'

'Lady Meadows is my relation,' resumed Miss Courteney; 'she took me, a poor helpless orphan, under her protection, and during some time treated me with the tenderness of a mother. Within these few weeks I have unhappily lost her favour, not by any fault of mine, I assure you, for I have always loved and revered her. Nothing should have obliged me to take this step, which has no doubt an appearance of ingratitude, but the fear of being forced to marry a man I hate.'

'O heavens! my dear creature,' exclaimed the lady in an affected tone, 'what do you tell me! were you upon the point of being forced to a detested match?'—'Yes, Madam,' replied Miss Courteney; 'and to this hard lot was I doomed by her to whom I owe all my past happiness, and from whom I expected all the future.'

'You have obliged me excessively by this unreserved confidence,' interrupted the lady; 'and you shall find me not unworthy of it. From this moment I swear to you an inviolable attachment. Sure there is nothing so transporting as friendship and mutual confidence! You won my heart the moment I saw you. I have formed a hundred violent friendships, but one accident or other always dissolved them in a short time. There are very few

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persons

persons that are capable of a violent friendship; at least, I never could find one that answered my ideas of that sort of engagement. Have not you been often disappointed? Tell me, my dear: I dare say you have. Your sentiments, I believe, are as delicate as mine upon this head. I am charmed, I am ravished with this meeting! Who would have imagined that by chance, and in a stage-coach, I should have found what I have so earnestly sought for these three months, a person with whom I could contract a violent friendship, such as minds like ours are only capable of feeling?

'I am extremely obliged to you, Madam, for your good opinion,' said Miss Courteney; 'I hope I shall never be so unfortunate as to forfeit it; indeed I have reason to think that, in my present distressed situation, a friend is a blessing sent from heaven.'

'Well! but my dear Clelia,' said this flighty lady, 'you have not told me all your story. I call you Clelia, because you know it is so like common acquaintance to address one another by the title of Miss Such-a-one—Roman-tick names give a spirit to the correspondence between such friends as you and I are: but perhaps you may like another name better than Clelia; though I think that is a mighty pretty one, so soft and gliding, Clelia, Clelia—tell me, do you like it, my dear?'

'Call me what you please,' said Miss Courteney, smiling a little at the singularity of her new friend; 'but my name is Courteney.'

'Courteney is a very pretty surname,' said the lady; 'I hope it is not disgraced with any odious vulgar Christian name, such as Molly, or Betty, or the like.'

'I was christened Henrietta, after my mother,' said Miss Courteney. 'Henrietta is well enough,' returned the other; 'but positively, my dear, you must assume the name of Clelia when you write to me; for we must correspond every hour. Oh! what a ravishing pleasure it is to indulge the overflowings of one's heart upon paper! Remember to call me Celinda in your letters; and in all our private conversations, we shall have a thousand secrets to communicate to each other. But I am impatient to know all your story; it must needs be very romantick and pretty.'

'Alas!' said the charming Henrietta, 'this is no time to talk of my misfortunes; we are entered into Hammer-smith, and there you say you must leave me: give me your advice, dear Madam; tell me in what manner I must dispose of myself.'

'Dear Madam!' repeated the lady, 'is that the style then you resolve to use? have you forgot that we have contracted a violent friendship, and that I am your Celinda, and you my Clelia?'

'I beg your pardon,' said Henrietta; 'I did not think of that name. Well, then, dear Celinda, what would you advise me to do? I am going to London, there to conceal myself from the search that Lady Meadows will doubtless make for me when she hears I have left her house: all my hope of a reconciliation with her is through the interposition of a friend. I have a brother, who has been abroad several years, and whom I every day expect to hear is arrived; but I dare not show myself to any of Lady Meadows's acquaintance, lest I should be hurried back, and sacrificed to what she calls my interest. I know so little of the town, that I am afraid I may take up my residence in an improper house, among people where my honour, or at least my reputation, may be in danger. Direct me, dear Madam—my dear Celinda, I would say—direct me what to do in this dreadful dilemma.' Here she paused, anxiously expecting the answer of her new friend, which will be found in the following chapter.

C H A P. III.

WHICH ILLUSTRATES AN OBSERVATION OF ROCHEFOUCAULT'S, THAT IN THE MISFORTUNES OF OUR FRIENDS THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT DOES NOT DISPLEASE US.

'I Protest, my dearest Clelia,' said the lady, 'your fears are very natural upon this occasion. I should in your situation be almost distracted. Even our parents watchful cares are hardly sufficient to guard us against the attempts of insolent men: how much more then are those attempts to be dreaded, when we are left defenceless and exposed! Believe me, my dear, I sympathize

'sympathize truly with you in this misfortune. Good Heaven! I think I should die with apprehension were I in your case.'

'Don't terrify me,' said Miss Courteney, trembling. 'I have taken an imprudent step, but I must make the best of it now: Providence, I hope, will be my guard.'

'I would not terrify you, my dear,' said the lady; 'but I must repeat, that were I in your case, I think my fears would distract me. Thank Heaven! I am protected by watchful parents, cautious relations, and prudent friends; yet hardly thus can I think myself secure from those enterprising wretches the men.'

This young lady had indeed a stronger protector than all these, which she did not mention, or perhaps was insensible of; and that was the extreme disagreeableness of her whole person. Her features, it is true, could not be called irregular, because few faces were ever distinguished with a set more uniformly bad. Her complexion, which was a composition of green and yellow, was marvellously well suited to her features. Nor was it possible to make any invidious comparisons between her face and her shape, since it was hard to decide which was worst.

Miss Courteney, who had burst into tears, occasioned by her reflections on her own helpless situation, compared with the advantages her friend enjoyed, and which she had so ostentatiously enumerated, was upon the point of soliciting her advice again; when the lady joyfully exclaimed—'Oh! there is my aunt's house, my dear Clelia, we must part immediately.'

'Sure,' said Henrietta, sighing, 'you will not leave me till you have advised me what to do.'

'Lord! my dear,' said the other, 'one young creature is not qualified to give another advice upon such occasions. I wish it was in my power to give you proper advice; you know I have vowed to you an inviolable friendship. And—'

Here the coachman, as he had been directed, stopped before a large handsome house; and a well-dressed footman immediately appearing, came forwards to open the coach-door.

'Hear me one word,' cried Miss Courteney, perceiving this tender friend

was actually going to leave her without any farther solicitude for her safety—

'upon the strength of that inviolable friendship you have vowed to me, I will venture to ask a favour of you: it is,' pursued she, 'that you will recommend me to some person of your acquaintance in London, who may direct me to a decent house, where I can remain in safety till my brother's arrival.'

'I vow this is a lucky thought!' said the lady; 'I believe I can serve you, my dear Clelia; but you must step in with me to my aunt's.—John,' said she to the servant, 'is my aunt at home?' The man told her his lady was just gone to take an airing.

'That's well,' said the lady; 'we shall have an opportunity to settle this matter: but, my dear Clelia, I think it will be best to discharge the coach, the fellow possibly will not wait. I'll send my aunt's servant to take a place for you in the Hammersmith stage, which I know does not set out this half hour.'

Henrietta readily complied, overjoyed that she had really found a sincere friend in the person of this whimsical lady; who, having led her into a large well-furnished parlour, ordered some tea to be brought, and then told her, that she would give her a letter to her milliner, who was a very good sort of a woman, and where she might depend upon being absolutely safe.

'When I was last in town,' pursued she, 'which was about three weeks ago, her first floor was empty; and in this season of the year, I believe, she will let it to you for two guineas a week.'

'A single room will do for me,' said Miss Courteney; 'my circumstances do not entitle me to magnificent lodgings, and my business is to keep myself private.'

'Well, well, my dear, be that as you please,' said the other; 'I will write the letter without mentioning what lodgings you require.' Saying this, she called for pens and paper; and having wrote the following billet, gave it to Miss Courteney for her perusal.

'DEAR MRS. EGRET,

THE lady who will deliver you this, is one for whom I have the most violent friendship imaginable. You know how ardent my friendships are; but I think I never had any so

B 2 family

'firmly rooted as this, though our acquaintance commenced but a few hours ago. This dear friend having desired me to recommend her to some person to lodge with, I thought of you, knowing you can accommodate her with genteel apartments. I am, dear Mrs. Egret, your humble servant,

'E. WOODBY.'

Henrietta having read the letter, returned it again into the hands of her friend, gratefully acknowledging the favour, although she had some objections to it; for she did not approve of the words Genteel Apartments, being resolved not to exceed a very moderate price: but she rightly conceived that Miss Woodby rather listened to her own pride than her convenience, by throwing in that circumstance, and therefore took no notice of it.

The letter being sealed and directed, Miss Courteney carefully deposited it in her pocket; and the two ladies were preparing to drink their tea, when the footman entered, and said the stage-coach was just going off: our fair traveller instantly rose up, and took leave of her friend, who having prevailed upon her to drink a glass of sack and water, since she was disappointed of her tea, parted from her with an affectionate embrace, and a promise that she would see her in town very shortly.

Miss Courteney finding only one passenger in the coach, who was a grave elderly woman, resumed her journey with some kind of cheerfulness, having thus happily got over her apprehensions of falling into bad company, where chance might have directed her to lodge.

CHAP. IV.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE, THROUGH INATTENTION, FALLS INTO THE VERY DIFFICULTY SHE HAD TAKEN SUCH PAINS TO AVOID.

BUT this cessation from uneasiness did not last long: for the mind which can fasten with violence but upon one circumstance of distress at a time, and being suddenly relieved from that, is sensible of a calm, which, compared with it's former feelings, may be called pleasure, soon selects another object to engross it's attention, and fixes on it with

equal anxiety and solicitude. Thus it fared with our lovely heroine, whose other cares had all been swallowed up in reflections on the danger to which her honour was exposed. Eased of these apprehensions by the good offices of Miss Woodby, she was happy for a few moments, till the consequences of her flight rushed full upon her mind: Lady Meadows's favour irrecoverable; her fortune ruined; her reputation blasted. This last thought, which, from the delicacy of her sentiments, gave her the deepest regret, dwelt most upon her mind; and, forgetting that she was not alone, she clasped her hands together in a violent emotion, and burst into tears.

The old gentlewoman, who had been eyeing her very attentively, not a little surprised at the seriousness that appeared in the looks and behaviour of so young a creature, eagerly asked her what was the matter.

Henrietta, roused by this question, which (so absent had she been) first informed her she was observed, wiped her eyes, and composing her countenance, said she was often low-spirited.

'Don't tell me of low spirits,' said the old gentlewoman; 'such young bodies as you are not low-spirited for nothing. What! I warrant you, there is a sweet heart in the case?'

'Oh! no Madam,' said Miss Courteney, blushing, 'no sweetheart, I assure you.'

'No, really?' resumed she; 'well, then, I suppose you have lost a friend.'

'I have indeed lost a friend,' said the young lady, hoping that acknowledgment would put an end to the questions of her fellow-traveller.

'Indeed!' said the old woman; 'and this friend—is it a father, or mother, or sister, or——'

'All, all,' interrupted Miss Courteney, bursting again into tears.

'How all?' repeated the old woman. 'Have you just now lost all these kins-folks?'

'I lost them all in losing that friend, Madam,' said Henrietta; vexed that her sensibility, awakened by such questions, had made her too little guarded in her expressions.

'Oh, oh, I understand you, child,' said the good gentlewoman: 'this person, I don't ask you whether it was a man or woman, was to you both father and mother. Well, and so I suppose

'pose you have just heard of the death of this good friend, and are going to town on that occasion?'

Miss Courteney, finding that the inquisitive temper of her fellow-traveller was likely to lead her into a discovery of her situation, chose rather to be silent than violate truth, by feigning circumstances to deceive her; and, fortunately for her, she was prevented from suffering more disagreeable interrogatories, by the coach's suddenly stopping at an inn in Piccadilly, where it put up.

The old gentlewoman, however, at parting, asked her what part of the town she was going to, and offered, if it was in her way, to accompany her; but Henrietta evaded the question and the offer, by telling her, that she intended to take a chair. The coachman accordingly called one for her, which she entered immediately; and being asked by the chairman where she would please to be carried, she recollected, with great confusion, that Miss Woodby had not told her where her milliner lived.

She now sought for the letter, hoping there was a full direction upon that. But what was her grief and perplexity, when she found the superscription contained only these words—'For Mrs. Egret!' 'Good Heaven!' exclaimed the fair unfortunate, 'what shall I do now?'

The chairman repeating his question, she told him that she had forgot a direction, and asked him if he knew where Mrs. Egret, a milliner, lived. The fellow replied in the negative; but added, that he would enquire. He accordingly stepped into the nearest shop, which was a haberdasher's; and making a small blunder in the name, which the person he spoke to mistook for Eccles, he was told, that the milliner for whom he enquired lived in Charles Street.

The fellow returned, extremely pleased with his success, and relieved the young lady from her anxiety, who bid him carry her directly to Charles Street; and she soon found herself at the door of a milliner's shop, where she discharged her chairmen; and entering, asked a young woman, whom she saw at work, if her mistress was at home.

The girl desired her to walk into a parlour, where she was met by an agreeable well dressed woman, who received her with great politeness, and desired to know her commands.

'I have a letter for you,' said Hen-

rietta, putting it into her hands, 'from a young lady, a customer of yours: the contents will acquaint you with my business.'

The milliner took the letter, and having read it, returned it again with a smile, saying, she was not the person to whom it was addressed.

'Not Madam,' said Miss Courteney, excessively surprized; 'is not your name Egret?'

'My name is Eccles, Madam,' said the milliner. 'Bless me!' cried Miss Courteney, 'the chairmen have made a mistake: I bid one of them enquire where Mrs. Egret, a milliner, lived, and he was directed hither. I shall be obliged to you,' pursued Henrietta, 'if you will let your maid call a chair.'

'To be sure, Madam,' said the milliner; 'but do you not know where this Mrs. Egret lives?'

'I have unfortunately forgot to get a direction,' returned the young lady; 'but I hope you can inform me.'

'I wish I could, Madam,' said the milliner; 'but really I know no such person as Mrs. Egret.'—'Surely I am the most unfortunate creature in the world!' cried Henrietta.

'I hope not, Madam,' said Mrs. Eccles, with a look of great complacency; 'there are more persons, besides Mrs. Egret, who would be glad to accommodate you with lodgings. I wish mine were good enough for you.'

'Oh! they are good enough, no doubt,' replied Miss Courteney; 'but I was recommended to Mrs. Egret, and——' 'Pray, Madam, walk up, and look at my first floor,' said Mrs. Eccles; and, without waiting for any reply, immediately led the way.

Henrietta followed in such perplexity of mind, that she hardly knew what she did; and, while the officious milliner led her from room to room, expatiating at large upon the conveniencies, she continued silent, revolving in her thoughts the dilemma to which she was reduced.

The evening was so far advanced, that she could not think of going in quest of Mrs. Egret, of whom she could get no information here; yet she was not able to resolve upon taking lodgings in the house of a person to whom she was an absolute stranger: a misfortune which she had vainly endeavoured to avoid by the application she had made to Miss Woodby.

'I am afraid you don't like this apartment,

‘apartment, Madam,’ said Mrs. Eccles, who observed her look pensive and uneasy. ‘I have no objection to it,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘but that it is rather too good. I do not propose to go to a high price; a bed-chamber, and the use of a parlour, will be sufficient for me.’

The milliner looked a little dissatisfied at these words, but told her she could accommodate her with a large handsome bed-chamber up two pair of stairs; but added, that she had no other parlour than that which she kept for her own use.

Miss Courteney desired to see the room, which was indeed very handsome and convenient; and the milliner perceiving she liked it, told her, that she should be welcome to the use of the dining-room till her first floor was lett.

The young lady thought this an obliging proposal; and, being pleased with the woman’s countenance and behaviour, ventured to make an agreement with her; and every thing being settled upon very easy terms—‘There is but one difficulty remaining,’ said she, with an engaging smile, ‘and that I know not how we shall get over; we are strangers to each other.’

‘Oh, Madam,’ interrupted Mrs. Eccles, ‘though it is not my custom to take in lodgers without having a character, yet I can have no scruple with regard to a lady of your appearance. As for me, I have lived a great many years in this neighbourhood, and am not afraid of having my character enquired into.’

She spoke this with a little warmth, which made Henrietta imagine she expected the same kind of confidence she had shewn: so, making a merit of necessity, she appeared very well satisfied, and immediately took possession of her new apartment.

CHAP. V.

WHICH CONTAINS NOTHING BUT
VERY COMMON OCCURRENCES.

MRS. Eccles being summoned into her shop by a customer, Miss Courteney desired her to send up pen, ink, and paper, being resolved to write to Miss Woodby that night, and acquaint her with the disappointment she had met with. The maid soon

appeared with candles, and all the materials for writing; delivering, at the same time, her mistress’s compliments to the young lady, and a request that she would favour her with her company to supper. Miss Courteney promised to wait on her, provided she was alone; and, sitting down, wrote the following letter to her new friend.

‘YOU will, no doubt, my dear Miss Woodby, be both surprised and grieved to know that your kind intentions have been frustrated; and that, by forgetting to give me a direction, your recommendation to Mrs. Egret has proved useless to me. By a mistake of the chairman, who I desired to enquire where Mrs. Egret lived, I was brought to another milliner’s; and she not being able to direct me where to find her, I am obliged to take up my lodging with a stranger. It was my apprehensions of what has befallen me, that induced me to trust you with my secret, a secret of the highest importance to me; and most generously did you repay my confidence by your ready assistance. It was my ill fortune which ordered it so, that I should not profit by your kindness. However, my gratitude is equally engaged; and, since I observe nothing disagreeable in the behaviour of the person in whose house I now am, I shall endeavour to make myself easy till I hear from you. I long to see you, to tell you my unhappy story, to have your compassion, or rather to be justified by your approbation of what I have been compelled by circumstances to do. Oh! my dear Miss, how unhappy is that mind, which, with right intentions, feels a consciousness of something wrong in its resolutions! Direct for me by the name of Benson, at Mrs. Eccles’s, milliner, in Charles Street. Adieu. I sign the pretty name you gave me.’

‘CLELIA.’

Henrietta had just sealed her letter, when somebody tapped at her door; she opened it immediately, and seeing Mrs. Eccles, asked her pardon for not waiting on her before. Mrs. Eccles told her, that her little supper being ready, she came to see if she was at leisure.

Miss Courteney found the cloth spread in the parlour, and an elegant supper was served

served up. Mrs Eccles did not fail to apologize frequently for the meanness of her entertainment, and was gratified with as many assurances from her fair guest, that no apology was necessary. During the repast, Mrs. Eccles entertained her with an account of the newest fashions, the most celebrated performers of the opera and playhouses, little pieces of scandal, and the like topicks of conversation, which Henrietta had often heard discussed among her more polite acquaintance; and, indeed, almost the only ones that engage the attention during the recess of the card-table.

The milliner then turning the discourse to the accident that procured her so agreeable a lodger, artfully pursued her hints, till the young lady found herself obliged to satisfy, in some degree, her curiosity concerning her situation.

Though she was naturally communicative, even to a fault, yet she did not think proper to disclose herself farther, than to tell her, that she had been obliged to come to London upon some affairs of consequence, which could not be settled till the arrival of her brother, who was every day expected from his travels.

This account was so near the truth, that Miss Courteney, in the simplicity of her own heart, thought it could not fail of being believed. However, the milliner, who knew the world very well, conceived there was something extraordinary in the case—nothing less than a love-intrigue: nor did this suspicion give her any uneasiness. She was one of those convenient persons with whom a lady, upon paying a certain sum of money, might lie-in privately, and be properly attended. She made no scruple of accommodating with lodgings a young wife, whose husband, for certain family reasons, visits her only now and then; and as she generally found her account in such sort of lodgers, she seldom desired, and indeed was seldom incumbered, with any other.

The youth, beauty, and elegance of Miss Courteney, the introductory letter so oddly conceived, her apparent perplexity and concern upon her disappointment of the lodgings she had expected, raised suspicions, which the story she now heard confirmed; and not doubting but this affair would prove beneficial to her, she exerted her utmost endeavours to please her fair lodger, and engage her to an entire confidence.

When the clock struck eleven, Henrietta rose up, in order to retire to her own chamber, to which Mrs. Eccles officiously attended her. Having taken leave of her at the door, she bolted it on the inside; and, after recommending herself to the protection of Heaven, went to bed, but not to rest. A thousand inquietudes kept her waking till the morning, when she sunk into a slumber that lasted till eleven o'clock.

As soon as she opened her eyes, she was informed, by the strong light in her chamber, that the morning was far advanced; and finding by her watch, which lay on a chair near her bed-side, how much she had exceeded her usual time, (for she was a very early riser) she hurried on her cloaths, and went down stairs, being extremely anxious to get her letter sent to Miss Woodby: she went directly into the shop, supposing she should find Mrs. Eccles there; but was excessively surprised to hear from the apprentice, that her mistress was not yet up.

‘I suppose,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘she rested no better than myself last night, which was the cause of my lying so late this morning.’

‘La! Ma’am,’ replied the girl, ‘my mistress is never up before eleven or twelve.’—‘Indeed!’ said the young lady, dissembling her concern at a circumstance which gave her no favourable opinion of her landlady. ‘But,’ ‘Madam,’ added the girl, ‘you may have your breakfast whenever you please to order it.’ She then called the maid, whom Miss Courteney ordered to fetch a porter; being determined to have her letter delivered into Miss Woodby’s own hands, if possible. A porter was soon found, who undertook to carry the letter to Hammer-smith, as directed; and this affair being dispatched, Henrietta ordered some chocolate for her breakfast, and retired to her own chamber.

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH MISS WOODBY AGAIN
MAKES HER APPEARANCE.

IN about a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Eccles appeared in a long loose linen sack, being her morning dress, and insisted upon Miss Courteney’s breakfasting with her; who at length consented, having agreed to pay at the rate of a guinea

guinea a week for her board, during the time she stayed, which she only determined should not be long.

After the tea-things were removed, she went into the shop to make a purchase of some ribbands and gloves; and while she was amusing herself with looking over a great variety of fashionable trifles, which the apprentice officiously shewed her, a young gentleman, who had been attracted by her appearance, came into the shop, and asked to look at some Dresden ruffles. Henrietta, blushing at the earnestness with which he gazed on her, retired immediately, telling Mrs. Eccles, as she passed through the parlour, that there was a gentleman in the shop. The milliner, upon this information, lifted up her hands mechanically to her head to adjust her hair, and hastened to attend her customer; while her fair lodger, taking a book that lay in the window, went to her apartment, with an intention to amuse herself with reading till the longed-for return of her messenger.

The book, however, which was a volume of the *New Atalantis*, did not suit her taste; she threw it away, and abandoned herself to her own melancholy reflections, which were at length interrupted by her landlady, who entered the room with a smiling air, telling her, she had had a very good customer.

‘I am glad of it,’ said Henrietta.

‘Truly,’ said Mrs. Eccles, ‘I believe I am obliged to your fair face for my good luck this morning.’—‘How!’ returned the young lady, with a countenance graver than before.

‘Nay, never wonder at it,’ said Mrs. Eccles; ‘the gentleman laid out twelve guineas with me; but I don’t believe he wanted the things he bought. You were the loadstone,’ added she smartly, ‘that drew him into the shop. He asked me a hundred questions about you.’

‘I am sorry for it,’ said Miss Courteney; ‘I wish I had not been in the shop.’—‘And why sorry, pray?’ resumed Mrs. Eccles; ‘I warrant you are sorry you are handsome too. However, I have another thing to tell you, to increase your sorrow, and that is, that you have certainly made a conquest of this fine spark; and, to overwhelm you with affliction,’ pursued she, laughing, ‘I verily believe he is a man of quality.’

‘Do you know him, then?’ said Miss

Courteney, who could not help smiling a little at her vivacity.

‘I only judge by his appearance and manners,’ replied Mrs. Eccles, ‘that he is a man of rank; but I dare say, we shall hear more from him.’—

‘Sure, Mrs. Eccles!’ interrupted Miss Courteney, with some emotion.

‘Nay, nay, child,’ exclaimed Mrs. Eccles, ‘don’t put yourself into a flurry; I don’t know that I shall ever see him again.—But, pray, what book have you got here?’—‘One I found in your parlour,’ said Miss Courteney. ‘Oh, I see what it is,’ cried Mrs. Eccles, opening it; ‘it is a charming pretty book. If you love reading, Miss, I can furnish you with books; I have a very pretty collection.’—‘I should be glad to see your collection,’ said the young lady, who was apprehensive of her renewing a conversation that had been very disagreeable to her.

Mrs. Eccles immediately led her into a little room on the same floor, and opening a closet, in which there were about two dozen books ranged on a shelf, she bid her take her choice, for there was variety enough.

Henrietta soon examined the so much boasted collection, which she found chiefly consisted of novels and plays. ‘Well,’ said Mrs. Eccles, ‘how do you like my books? are they not prettily chosen?’

‘I assure you,’ replied she, taking down one, ‘you chose very well when you chose this; for it is one of the most exquisite pieces of humour in our language.’—‘I knew you would approve of my taste,’ said Mrs. Eccles, ‘but what have you got? O! the *Adventures of Joseph Andrews*. Yes; that is a very pretty book, to be sure!—but there is Mrs. Haywood’s *Novels*, did you ever read them? Oh! they are the finest love-sick, passionate stories; I assure you, you’ll like them vastly: pray, take a volume of Haywood upon my recommendation.’—‘Excuse me,’ said Henrietta, ‘I am very well satisfied with what I have; I have read this book three times already; and yet I assure you, I shall begin it again, with as much eagerness and delight as I did at first.’

‘Well, as you please,’ said Mrs. Eccles, leaving her at the door of her own chamber; ‘I won’t disturb you till dinner is ready.’

Miss

Miss Courteney sat down to her book, which agreeably engaged her attention; till she was interrupted with the pleasing news of her porter's being returned: she flew down stairs; he delivered her a letter, the seal of which she eagerly broke, and found it as follows.

CELINDA TO HER DEAREST CELIA.

NO words can describe the excess of my grief at the news of your disappointment: but, my dear, how was it possible for your chairmen to mistake the house so egregiously? Not know where Mrs. Egret lived! Foolish fellows! she is one of the greatest milliners in town, and employed by persons of the first rank. But don't be uneasy, I shall see you this afternoon: your messenger found me preparing to set out for town with my aunt. Adieu, my Celia; and believe me, with the most unparalleled affection, ever your's,

CELINDA.

The hopes of seeing her friend, and being settled in more agreeable lodgings, gave Henrietta such a flow of spirits, that when she was summoned to dinner by her landlady, she appeared less reserved than usual, and even kept up the conversation with some kind of cheerfulness. Mrs. Eccles, finding her in so good a humour, introduced the subject which ran most in her head. The fine young gentleman, who had been her customer in the morning, was praised in raptures of admiration—so genteel, so well bred, such sparkling eyes, such an air of distinction—every now and then exclaiming, 'Well, you have certainly made a conquest of him—we shall see him again, never fear—he'll find his way here again, I warrant him.'

Miss Courteney, to put an end to this discourse, told her landlady, that she expected a lady to drink tea with her that afternoon. Mrs. Eccles immediately gave orders for the dining-room to be put in order, and thither Miss Courteney retired in expectation of her visiter. At six o'clock a footman's rap at the door announced the arrival of Miss Woodby; Henrietta ran to the head of the stairs to receive her.

'O Heavens! my dear creature,' cried Miss Woodby, 'what trouble have I been in upon your account!—but even the disquiets of friendship are pleasing; I would not be insensible of that charm-

ing passion, nor without an object of it, for the world.'

Miss Courteney thanked her in very obliging terms, while her sentimental friend adjusted her dress in the glass, and then throwing herself into a chair, declared that she was all impatience to hear her history.

'Permit me,' said Miss Courteney, 'to inform you first, that I am not easy here; I do not greatly like my landlady, and I wish I could remove this very night.' Miss Woodby told her it was impossible, because she had not yet seen Mrs. Egret, but that she would go to her in the morning, and prepare her for her coming. Henrietta, being now at ease, complied with her friend's request, and began her little history in this manner.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA RELATES THE STORY OF HER PARENTS, INTRODUCTORY TO HER OWN.

IT is no wonder, my dear Miss Woodby, that at these early years I am precipitated into distresses and dangers; my very birth was a misfortune to my parents, and entailed upon them those miseries which began by their unhappy passion.

My father was the youngest of three brothers, but so great a favourite of his father the Earl of —, that it was thought he would make his fortune very considerable, having a very large estate, and a very lucrative employment, out of which he every year laid by large sums to provide for his younger sons, of whom my father, as I have already said, was the best beloved.

It happened one day, that the widow of an officer in the army came to solicit the earl's interest towards getting her a pension. She was accompanied by her daughter, a young woman about sixteen years of age, and who must at that time have been exquisitely handsome, since, after a long series of troubles, and in an age more advanced, she appeared to me one of the most beautiful women in the world.

The widow, by a certain method of persuasion, which operates powerfully on the domesticks of men in place, got her petition sent up to the earl.

‘ earl. It imported that her husband, after having served near fifty years in the army, had obtained leave to sell his commission for the benefit of his wife and child; that the money arising from it had been deposited in the hands of an agent who had broke a few months afterwards, by which unhappy accident all the money was lost, and this loss had so greatly affected the old gentleman, that he died a few weeks afterwards, leaving his wife and child wholly unprovided for, and made wretched by those very means that were calculated to secure them a genteel subsistence; since by the sale of her husband’s commission, the widow was no longer intrusted to a pension, which however she hoped to obtain, in consideration of his long services, and the peculiar circumstances of her misfortune.

‘ The widow, who knew it was in this nobleman’s power to put her immediately upon the list of pensions, conceived great hopes of the success of her application, when, after waiting two hours in the hall, she was ordered to attend his lordship in his library.

‘ The nobleman received her with civility enough; but his first words destroyed those expectations with which she had flattered herself.

“ I am sorry it is not in my power to do you any service,” said he; “ your husband sold out, therefore you have no right to the pension. I pity your misfortune; but in this case there is nothing to be done.”

‘ The widow was a woman of sense and breeding; she was sensible that the earl paid no regard to her plea, otherwise he would not have urged that as an argument against granting her petition, without which no petition would have been necessary: intreaties she found would be fruitless, therefore she would not descend to the meanness of a suppliant, but curst in silent anguish, and withdrew.

‘ The earl’s youngest son, who was present at this scene, and who had beheld the decent sorrow of the mother with reverence, the innocent beauty of the daughter with tender admiration, impelled by an emotion which yet he knew not the cause of, hastily followed them, and offered his hand to the widow to lead her down stairs.

‘ She, who from a natural dignity of sentiment, had been enabled to endure the supercilious behaviour of the father without betraying any signs of discomposure, burst into tears at this instance of unexpected attention and respect in the son.

‘ Mr. Courteney, as he led her down stairs: had his eyes incessantly turned towards the young lady, who followed blushing, to see herself so earnestly beheld. He found they had not a coach waiting for them; he ordered a servant to call one; and in the mean time desired they would walk into a parlour, where he took occasion to express his concern to the widow for the disappointment she had met with; but assured her, that he would employ his good offices in her favour; and from the influence he had over his father, he said he hoped he should succeed. He then desired to know where he might wait upon her, in case he had any good news to bring her.

‘ The widow, charmed with his politeness, astonished at his kindness, and full of hope and pleasing expectation, gave him a direction in writing, which she had brought with her.

‘ Mr. Courteney received it, bowing low, as if she had conferred a favour on him; a favour it was indeed, for, by this time, he was lost in love for the charming daughter, whose looks discovered such soft sensibility of her situation; such conscious dignity, which misfortune could not impair; such calm resignation, as if, superior to her woes, that her beauty seemed her least perfection; and he was more captivated by the graces of her mind that shone out in her person, than with her lovely person itself.

‘ The coach was now come; he sighed when he took leave of them, rivetting his eyes on the young charmer, who modestly looked down, unable to bear his ardent glances. Again he assured the widow of his services; and, suddenly recollecting himself, he put a purse into her hand, begging her to accept that trifle as an earnest of his friendship.

‘ The lady was so much surprised at his behaviour, that she was at a loss in what manner to answer him; and, before she could form any, she found herself in the coach, to which he had accompanied her with great respect.

‘ When

When the coach drove from the door, she examined the contents of the purse, and found five and twenty guineas in it: a present which, if it had been less, would have mortified her pride, and being so considerable, alarmed her prudence. She recollected every circumstance of the young gentleman's behaviour, and all contributed to persuade her, that he was actuated by some motive more forcible than mere compassion.

She remembered that she had caught him gazing earnestly at her daughter; she reproached herself for taking her with her, for accepting the money, for giving a direction. She dreaded the consequence of having exposed her child to the attempts of a young man formed to please, and by his rank and fortune enabled to pursue every method that could gratify his passions. She began now to be solicitous about the effect such uncommon generosity had on the mind of her daughter. She asked her what she thought of the gentleman, who so kindly interested himself in their affairs, notwithstanding the cruel denial his father had given?

Miss, whose gratitude had with difficulty been restrained from rising from her heart to her tongue, eagerly seized this opportunity to praise their benefactor. Her expressions were so lively, she showed so tender a sensibility of his kindness, such a blushing approbation of his person and manners, that the good widow thought proper to check her vivacity by a little reproof, and attributed all the respect he had shown them to his natural politeness, and his offers of service; and the present he had forced on her, to a sudden fall of compassion which young unexperienced persons are liable to. However, her apprehensions were now increased; and when Mr. Courteney came to see her, in consequence of his promise, which was two days afterwards, she had already taken her resolution.

She took care that her daughter should not be in the way when he sent up his name; and, notwithstanding the politeness with which he accosted her, she observed that he was disappointed, and that his eyes involuntarily sought out an object which he more wished to see than her.

'I don't know whether these little particulars may not seem tedious to you, my dear Miss Woodby; but I have often heard my mother repeat

them with delight, declaring that these first tokens of my father's affection for her made so deep an impression on her heart, fluctuating, as it then was, between hope and fear, that she ever retained the most lively remembrance of them, and could never relate them without feeling in some degree the same pleasing emotions with which she was at that time agitated.

Mr. Courteney began the conversation with assuring the widow, that he had been mindful of her affairs; that his solicitations had not yet indeed had the desired effect, but that he hoped shortly to bring her better news. The widow thanked him with great politeness for his kind interposition in her favour, which she declared would always have a claim to her sincerest gratitude, whether he succeeded or not in his applications. She then drew the purse out of her pocket, and putting it respectfully into his hands, told him, that not being in any immediate necessity, she begged he would not take it ill if she declined accepting a present which would lay her under an unreturnable obligation.

Mr. Courteney blushed with surprise and disappointment; but the dignity with which she looked and spoke, making it impossible for him to press her any farther, he received the money back again with a low bow, apologizing at the same time for the liberty he had taken.

The widow, seeing him disconcerted, politely recommended her interests to him; and Mr. Courteney, charmed that she would allow him to be her friend on any terms, retired with a promise that he would take as much care of them as of his own.

This interview, continued Henrietta, confirmed the widow in her suspicions, that her daughter was not indifferent to their new benefactor: he had observed her scrupulous reserve with regard to the young beauty, and hoped to remove it by affecting a total neglect of her; so that he did not even enquire how she did. Whatever is done with design is always overdone: the widow was persuaded that a man of Mr. Courteney's good breeding would not have passed over one of the common forms of politeness, but to answer some secret purpose. Her vigilance increased in proportion to her fears; and although he made her several

visits, under pretence of enquiring more minutely into the circumstances of her case, yet he never was so fortunate as to find her daughter with her.

This conduct, while it stimulated his passion, gave him a high opinion of the virtue and prudence of her, who, in such unhappy circumstances, showed such extreme attention to the honour and reputation of her child. Hitherto he had not been at the trouble to examine his own views and designs upon this young beauty. Hurried away by the violence of his passion, he had assiduously sought opportunities of seeing and conversing with her; but the difficulties he met with made him look into his own heart, that he might know if he was still sufficient master of it to give over a pursuit which was likely to prove fruitless.

Amazed to find that what he took for a transient inclination, was a passion immoveably fixed; that he had formed resolutions, when he believed he had only entertained desires; that the whole happiness and misery of his life was in the power of a young woman, destitute of friends, fortune, hopes, and expectations, and rich only in beauty and virtue—for virtuous he was sure she must be, under the care of so wise and prudent a mother—he was alarmed at his own condition; dreaded the consequences of a passion so placed as that it could never procure the sanction of his father's consent, and resolved to expose himself no more to the danger of seeing her.

However, he did not fail to solicit his father very earnestly in behalf of the unfortunate widow. The earl, who had taken notice of his officious respect the day she was introduced to him, and attributed it rather to the beauty of the daughter than any sentiment of compassion, began to be uneasy at his so frequently pressing him on that subject, and forbade him to mention it any more.

Mr. Courteney was obliged to be silent, lest he should confirm those suspicions which he saw his father had conceived; and finding his mind in a very uneasy state, he hoped that, by removing himself to a greater distance from the object he loved, he should remove the thoughts of her likewise: he obtained his father's consent to his retiring for a few weeks to their seat

in the country, under pretence of a slight indisposition; but he could not resolve to go without endeavouring once more to force a present upon the widow, which might prevent her being exposed to any distress during his absence.

He therefore wrote to her, and acquainting her with the ill success of his mediation with his father, expressed the highest concern for it, and assured her that nothing could alleviate it but her acceptance of the bank note which he inclosed, and which was for fifty pounds: he told her, he was going into the country, that she might not suppose he had any design of inducing her by such a present to admit his visits; and concluded with assuring her, that she might at all times command his services, and rely on his friendship.

He did not send away this letter till he was ready to take horse; and being now more composed, from the belief that he had silenced the scruples of this good woman, and secured her and her lovely daughter from any immediate necessity, he pursued his journey, full of pleasing reflections on the disinterestedness of his love.

C H A P. VIII.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA CONTINUES HER HISTORY.

ABSENCE, says a certain writer, 'increases violent passions, and cures moderate ones; just as the wind extinguishes a small flame, while it makes a great one burn more fiercely.' Mr. Courteney's passion was of this kind; he had loved with violence from the moment he began to love. In vain he had recourse to books, to company, to field sports, and rural amusements; it was not possible for him to call off his thoughts a moment from that object from whom he fled with such care. Two months he wore away in a constant perturbation of mind, still flattering himself that he was nearer his cure, while his disease gathered strength every day.

It happened that one evening he fell into company with some officers, whose regiment was quartered in that part of the country; and one of them mentioned Colonel Carlton, and the unhappy

‘ unhappy situation his widow and daughter were left in.

‘ Mr. Courteney, roused to attention by that name so dear to him, pretended to be wholly ignorant of those ladies’ case, that he might indulge himself in the pleasure of talking of her he loved.

‘ The officer gave him a circumstantial detail of what he knew as well as himself; concluding with many commendations of Mrs. Carlton’s good sense, prudence, and virtue; and such rapturous praises of the young lady’s beauty and uncommon qualifications at such early years, that Mr. Courteney, for the first time sensible of the tortures of jealousy, could with difficulty conceal his emotions.

‘ “You speak so feelingly,” said a gentleman in company, “of this young lady’s perfections, that I fancy you are in love with her. Come, here is her health; is it to be a match?”

‘ “I should be but too happy in such a wife,” replied the officer; “but she deserves a better husband: it is not for a poor lieutenant,” added he, smiling, “to marry for love; but if I was a man of fortune; I would prefer Miss Carlton to all the women I have ever seen.”

‘ Mr. Courteney afterwards declared, that he suffered inconceivable anguish during this conversation. He quitted the company with some precipitation; and when he was at liberty to reflect, he reproached himself a thousand times for his folly in leaving such a treasure for another to obtain. Every man he thought would look upon Miss Carlton with the same eyes as that young officer; and among them might not one be found blest with a fortune to make her happy, and above all narrow considerations which could hinder him from making himself so?

‘ Resolutions are easily formed when the heart suggests them. Mr. Courteney, who had so long fluctuated between his passion and his prudence, was, by the fear of losing what he loved, determined in an instant to put it past the possibility of losing her. His father’s anger, which at first appeared so formidable to him, was now considered as a trifle, that would be easily got over: he was not going to introduce any stale mistress into a noble family, nor to give a comedian or singer

‘ for a sister to his sisters, and a daughter to his mother; alliances so much in fashion with the present race of nobility and people of distinction: in Miss Carlton he should marry birth, beauty, virtue, every perfection but riches; but unhappily that, in the estimation of his father, was worth them all.

‘ His fortune indeed was undetermined; it might be great, it might be very inconsiderable, since it depended upon the will of his father. His father would never consent to his marriage with Miss Carlton; but though disoblige, yet, loving him as he did, was it likely that he would always continue inexorable? Besides, he had a certain, though a remote prospect, of a large estate, to which he was to succeed at the death of a relation, who was old, and had been married twenty years, without having ever had a child.

‘ Should he find it impossible to reconcile his father to his marriage, yet he was secure at least of a genteel provision; but with such excellencies as Miss Carlton was possessed of, how could it be imagined that she should not in time conciliate his father’s affections, and make him approve of his choice?

‘ There is no logick, my dear Miss Woodby, like the logick of the heart. Mr. Courteney, as is usual on such occasions, having taken his resolution before he reasoned upon the matter, reasoned afterwards in such a manner as to be soon persuaded his resolution was right.

‘ Early the next morning he ordered his horses to be made ready, and he returned to London with all imaginable expedition. He alighted at the house of a friend, where he dismissed his servants and horses, and then taking a hackney coach, was driven to the street in which Mrs. Carlton lived. Upon stopping at the house, and enquiring for Mrs. Carlton, he was told that she had left it five weeks before, and being greatly indisposed, had taken lodgings at Chelsea for the air.

‘ Mr. Courteney, who now thought every moment an age till he saw Miss Carlton, and had acquainted her with his passion and his honourable intentions, procured as full a direction as could be given him; but notwithstanding his impatience to be with his mistress,

‘ mistress, he obeyed the dictates of his duty, in first going home to pay his respects to his father.

‘ The earl received him a little coldly; an expression of displeasure was on his countenance, which however wore off by degrees, as he enquired concerning his health, his studies and amusements, during his absence. At length seeming to recollect something, he went to his cabinet, took out a letter, the seal of which had been broke, and delivered it into his son’s hand, assuming an angry countenance as before.

‘ Mr. Courteney, not able to imagine what all this meant, opened the letter hastily, and found it was from Mrs. Carlton, dated the very day of his departure, and in it was inclosed the bank note he had sent. The purport of her letter was to refuse in a genteel but steady manner all pecuniary assistance from him; however, she thanked him for his civilities, and acknowledged herself greatly obliged to him.

‘ When Mr. Courteney had read this letter, which he did with much confusion, the earl asked him sternly, what was his design by engaging in such a commerce? “You are in love with the daughter,” added he, “no doubt; but if you corrupt her, you are not an honest man; if you marry her, you are no longer my son.”

‘ He left him as he pronounced these words; and Mr. Courteney, who, while he beheld it at a distance, thought his father’s displeasure might be sustained, was overwhelmed with the first effects of it, and relapsed into all his former doubts, anxiety, and irresolution.

‘ He retired to his own chamber, to consider on what he ought to do; but, unable to bear the cruel war which such contrary interests, such opposite wishes, such perplexed designs, raised in his mind, he hurried out of the house to lose reflection in a variety of objects, and took his way to the Park.

‘ He walked down the Mall: it was crowded with company which did not in the least engage his attention; he continued his walk, and finding himself at Buckingham Gate, his steps mechanically pursued the road that led to Chelsea.

‘ As soon as he saw himself near the place where his mistress resided, all other thoughts were absorbed in the

‘ transporting reflection, that he should see her within a few moments; his father’s threats were forgot, the loss of his favour filled him with no uneasy apprehensions. To how many revolutions is the human mind subject, when passion has assumed the reins of government, which reason ought to hold! Mr. Courteney had almost imperceptibly to himself resumed his first design of offering his hand to Miss Carlton.

‘ With very little difficulty he found out the house where her mother and she lodged; the door was opened to him by a girl, who, upon his enquiring if Mrs. Carlton was at home, told him she was sick in bed, and, showing him into a little parlour, ran up stairs to acquaint Miss, as he supposed, that a gentleman was there.

‘ In a few minutes a venerable old woman appeared, who had so fixed a concern upon her countenance, that Mr. Courteney, shifting his thoughts from the illness of the mother to the apprehension of some possible misfortune to the daughter, (for love, if it hopes all, fears all likewise) asked her with great emotion if any thing extraordinary had happened to the ladies.

‘ The good woman, pleased with his solicitude, which she thought promised some relief, told him plainly, that Mrs. Carlton was in the utmost distress; that she had been ill several weeks; that she had not been able to procure proper advice; “And,” added she, bursting into tears, “she has even wanted common necessaries.”

‘ “O my God!” exclaimed Mr. Courteney, with a deep sigh; “but Miss—what is become of Miss?”—“Alas! Sir,” replied the old woman, “the dear child is almost dead with fatigue and grief; she has watched by her mother these ten nights successively, there is no persuading her to quit her for a moment. I left her in an agony of sorrow, for it is believed poor Mrs. Carlton cannot live three days.”

‘ “Conduct me to her,” cried Mr. Courteney eagerly; “I may possibly be able to comfort her; let me see her, I conjure you, immediately.”

‘ “Stay a moment, Sir,” said the old woman, stopping him, for he was making towards the door; “I will go up first and inform the ladies.”—“There is no occasion for that,” said

‘ Mr.

“ Mr. Courteney; “ Mrs. Carlton knows me very well; she will not, I am sure, be sorry to see me; I have something to say to her.”

“ The good woman, seeing his obstinacy, permitted him to follow her up stairs: she gently opened the chamber-door, and, approaching the bed where the sick lady lay, told her there was a friend of her’s who desired to see her. Mr. Courteney entered that moment, and beheld a sight which called for more fortitude than he was at that time possessed of to support without tears.

“ Mrs. Carlton lay extended on her bed, supported by a height of cushions to facilitate her breathing, which she seemed to do with great difficulty. Death appeared in her languid countenance; and an expression of the tender anguish of a mother for the child whom she was so soon to leave exposed to the insults of a barbarous world, mixed with the pious resignation of a Christian, was impressed on every line of it.

“ Miss Carlton was kneeling at the bed-side, and held one of her mother’s hands, which she was bending over in an agony of grief. Upon hearing what the old woman said, she raised her head; and, directing her streaming eyes to the place where Mr. Courteney stood, showed him a face pale, emaciated, but lovely still. At sight of him a faint blush overspread her cheeks, and hastily turning to her mother—“ It is Mr. Courteney, my dear mamma,” said she.

“ Oh! Sir,” said Mrs. Carlton, perceiving him, “ you are very good to seek out affliction thus, I shall shortly be past all my cares; but what will become of this poor helpless orphan?” The tears that streamed from her eyes prevented her farther utterance.

“ Mr. Courteney threw himself on his knees at the bed-side, and almost sobbing with the violence of his emotions at this affecting language—“ Oh! Madam,” said he, “ what must you not have suffered? why would you not accept what little assistance it was in my power to offer you? I know your delicate scruples. I come to beg you will give yourself a right to all my future services. I have something to communicate to you. But,” added

he, looking at the old woman who had introduced him, “ we are not alone.”

“ Speak freely, Sir,” said Mrs. Carlton; “ this good woman is my daughter’s nurse; she knows all my affairs; I am much indebted to her kindness and affection for my child.”

“ What I have to say,” proceeded Mr. Courteney, “ relates to that dear, that lovely daughter: I loved her from the first moment I saw her; such innocence, such beauty, could not suggest any impure desire. As soon as I knew the force of my passion, which absence first made me know, I fixed it’s purpose. Permit me to offer her my hand; I cannot be happy without her.”

“ What do you say, Sir?” said Mrs. Carlton, excessively surprised: “ would you marry my daughter?” Then, after a little pause, “ No,” pursued she, “ this can never be, your father will not consent to it.”

“ I own freely to you, Madam,” said Mr. Courteney, “ that I have no hopes of gaining my father’s consent; but when the affair is irretrievable, he will be softened, I am sure he will. Let not this scruple hinder you from giving your daughter a protector.”—“ Surely,” said Mrs. Carlton, lifting up her eyes, “ the hand of Providence is here; and it would be impious to oppose it’s will. You have my consent, Sir,” said she to Mr. Courteney; “ would it pleased God that you had his also, whom it is your duty to consult on this occasion, and to obey if you can.”

“ Mr. Courteney assured her he would solicit his father’s consent; but that he could not be happy without Miss Carlton, and was already determined.

“ That young lady had retired into another room at the beginning of this discourse, in perturbations which may be better imagined than described. Mr. Courteney, by her mother’s permission, attended her: he approached her with a timidity which, the inequality of their circumstances considered, may seem surprising; but those who know the nature of a sincere and violent passion, will easily account for it—for fear,” says an elegant writer, “ always accompanies love when it is great, as flames burn highest when they tremble most.” He took her hand,

“hand, and kissing it respectfully, told her that Mrs. Carlton had begun his felicity, by permitting him to offer himself to her acceptance as a husband, but that the only could compleat it by her consent.

“Miss Carlton blushed, turned pale, and blushed again: at length she replied, that she had no other will than her mother’s. “But this offer,” added she, in an accent that expressed at once her surprize and gratitude, “is so generous, so unexpected, so un- hoped for——” The last words seemed to escape her; she blushed more than before. Mr. Courteney took in all their tender meaning: he kissed her hand again in a rapture of joy, and was beginning to make her some passionate declarations, when they heard the nurse crying out for help.

“Surprize and joy at what had so lately happened, operated so powerfully on Mrs. Carlton’s almost exhausted spirits, that she had fallen into a fainting fit. Miss Carlton eagerly flew to her assistance, Mr. Courteney followed her with an anxious concern. As soon as she recovered, he told her he would instantly return to London, and dispatch a physician to attend her, and would be with her again the next evening.

“He took a tender farewell of his mistress; and calling the nurse aside, gave her twenty guineas, to provide whatever was wanting, and hastened back to London.

CHAP. IX.

THE STORY CONTINUED.

“MR. Courteney’s first care was to send a physician to the sick lady; and, that performed, he deliberated in what manner he should acquaint his father with his intention. He knew him too well to hope for his consent to his marriage with Miss Carlton; and he had not courage enough to stand the reproaches of a parent, whom he was predetermined to disobey. He chose therefore to write to him, supposing he should, when unawed by his presence, be able to find arguments strong enough to make some impression on his mind, and to plead his excuse.

“As he dreaded extremely a private interview with his father, he was glad to find, at his return home, that a great deal of company was expected that evening. He did not appear till they were all met, having purposely wasted a good deal of time in dressing. The earl was still ruffled with what had passed before between him and his son; and Mr. Courteney observed, that his looks and behaviour were less kind than usual.

“As soon as he retired to his apartment, instead of going to bed, he sat down to compose a letter to his father. He began with the highest expressions of grief for having, by an irresistible impulse, engaged his affections without his concurrence; he justified his choice by every argument that love could suggest in favour of the beloved object; he implored the continuance of his father’s affection; and promised in every future action the most perfect submission and obedience.

“This difficult task performed, he found his mind much easier and composed, as if in reality he had obtained the pardon he was soliciting for; and now resigned himself to all the pleasing reveries of successful love.

“After a few hours rest, he rose, under pretence of going out to ride; and, leaving orders with a servant to deliver his letter to his father at his hour of dressing, he went immediately to the Commons, procured a licence, and flew to Chelsea. He found Mrs. Carlton much worse than when he left her; yet joy at seeing him again seemed to give her new life and spirits. She called him to her bed side; he acquainted her with what he had done; she had some scruples, but the fear of leaving her daughter destitute overbalanced them all.

“I am dying,” said she, pressing his hand; “the physician you sent was too sincere to flatter me. I die contented, since I leave my child under your protection. Let the ceremony be performed in my presence; after that is over, I shall have no farther business with the world.” Miss Carlton, drowned in tears, and almost sinking under the violence of her grief, was with great difficulty persuaded to give her hand to her lover at so shocking a time; but her dying mother conjured her to give her that last satisfaction. A clergyman

clergyman was instantly provided by the faithful nurse; the clerk acted as father to the weeping bride; and Mr. Courteney's servant and the good nurse were witnesses. Never sure was there a more melancholy wedding—the bridegroom's joy was checked by sympathizing concern—the bride's tender sensibility lost in agonizing woe—the service was performed with the solemn sadness of a funeral.

As soon as it was over, Mrs. Carlton collected all her remaining strength and spirits to pronounce a blessing on the new-wedded pair; and straining her daughter with a weak embrace, declared, that she was now easy, and should die in peace. Mr. Courteney made a genteel present to the clergyman and the clerk, and dismissed them; he took an affectionate leave of Mrs. Carlton, who desired to be left to her private devotions; and earnestly recommending his bride to the care of her nurse, he went back to town with a resolution to declare his marriage to his father; his sentiments being too delicate, and his notions of honour too just, to permit him on any consideration of interest to conceal the engagements he had entered into, and suffer the woman whom he thought worthy to be his wife to live under a doubtful character.

On his return home he found his letter had been delivered to the earl. His mother, being informed of his arrival, sent for him to her dressing-room, where he found her in tears. She told him that his father had been in the most violent transports of anger, upon receiving his letter; and she conjured him, if he valued her peace, to proceed no farther in a design that must inevitably be his ruin.

Mr. Courteney sighed, and was preparing to answer her, when the earl himself entered the room. The impression of his first fury was still visible on his countenance. As soon as he saw his son, he poured a torrent of reproaches on him, inveighing against his meanness and ingratitude; then suddenly, and with great vehemence, uttered the most dreadful imprecations on him, if he followed the dictates of his despicably-placed passion, and married a beggar.

"Oh, hold, my lord!" cried Mr. Courteney, throwing himself at his feet; "curse me not, for I am already

married." The earl, almost mad with rage at this confession, spurned him rudely with his foot, and flung out of the room, declaring that he renounced him for ever.

Mr. Courteney, stung with indignation at this treatment, rose up, and uttered some words of resentment, when his attention was called off from the affront he had suffered, by the condition in which he observed his mother, who, from surprize and terror, had swooned, and lay motionless on the couch where she had thrown herself.

Mr. Courteney, excessively shocked at this sight, rung the bell for her woman, while he applied himself to give her all the assistance he was able. As soon as he saw her recovering, he staid not to increase her disorder by his presence, but retired to his apartment; and after he had taken all the money he had in his cabinet, he left that house which was now become dreadful to him, and went to the lodgings of a young gentleman who had been his fellow student at college, and whom he had reason to believe his friend, if friendship can be acquired by conferring obligations.

To this young gentleman he unloaded his heart, but found not the consolation he expected. He expressed the utmost astonishment and concern for his indiscreet marriage; and, instead of offering him any advice in his perplexed situation, or consoling him, oppressed as he was by the displeasure of his father, manifested in so contemptuous a manner, he maintained that the earl's anger was just and reasonable, and exclaimed at his imprudence in ruining himself for a woman.

Before the mischief was done, remonstrances might have been seasonable; but nothing could be more unkind than to insist upon an error which was already committed, and could not be repaired. Mr. Courteney was at first surpris'd at this behaviour in a man who had always shewn so deep a sense of his kindness, and professed the most tender friendship for him: but he had still temper enough left to consider, that most people follow their own interests, and are at one time grateful for their convenience, and at another ungrateful for the same reason.

He left him without taking any notice of the disgust he had conceived;

and after he had hired lodgings for the reception of his wife, he hastened to Chelsea, where he arrived time enough to moderate the first agonies of her grief for the loss of her mother, who had expired a few moments before.

Having given directions concerning the funeral, he forced Mrs. Courteney out of that mournful house, and carried her to London, applying himself with the tenderest assiduity to alleviate the sense of her loss, all his own just causes of uneasiness being forgot, and his anxiety for the melancholy future lost in his contemplation of the happy present: so true it is, that wedded love supplies the want of every other blessing in life; and as no condition can be truly happy without it, so none can be absolutely miserable without it.

CHAP. X.

A FARTHER CONTINUATION OF HER STORY.

IN the mean time Mr. Courteney corresponded privately with his mother, whose gentle nature had, with little difficulty, been softened into a forgiveness of her son's imprudent marriage; but all her endeavours to reconcile the earl to it had proved ineffectual. He continued inexorable, and peremptorily commanded her never to mention that undutiful son to him more, whom he reprobated for ever.

The countess durst not hazard an interview with her son, while his father's resentment continued unappeased; but she allowed him two hundred pounds a year out of her pin-money, and upon this moderate income they lived with more happiness than is often to be found in the highest affluence.

'And why not?' interrupted Miss Woodby here; 'a cottage, with the person we love, is to be preferred to a palace with one to whom interest and not affect on has joined us. I know I could be contented to keep sheep with the man I loved. Speak truth, my dear Clelia, would you not like to be a shepherdess? O, what a delightful employment, to watch a few harmless sheep! to wander through

groves and fields, or lie reclined upon the flowery margin of some murmuring stream, and listen to the plaintive voice of the nightingale, or the tender faithful vows of some lovely and beloved shepherd!'

'What a romantick picture,' said Miss Courteney, laughing, 'have you drawn! It is a mighty pretty one it must be confessed, but there is no resemblance in it. I remember, when I was about fourteen, I had the same notions of shepherds and shepherdesses; but I was soon cured. I happened to be at the house of a country gentleman, who managed a large farm of his own. One of the servants saying something about the shepherd, my heart danced at the word. My imagination represented to me such a pretty figure as we see on the stage in the dramattick pastoral entertainment of Damon and Phillida, in a fine green habit, all bedizened with ribbands, a neat crook, and a garland of flowers. I begged to be permitted to go into the fields to see the shepherd, and eagerly inquired if there were no shepherdesses likewise; but how was I disappointed!—The shepherd was an old man in a ragged waistcoat, and so miserably sun-burnt, that he might have been mistaken for a mulatto; the shepherdess looked like a witch; she was sitting under a hedge, mending old stockings, with a straw hive on her head, and a tattered garment on, of as many colours as there were patches in it. How diverting it would have been to have heard this enamoured swain sigh out soft things to this lovely nymph!'

'Oh! ridiculous,' cried Miss Woodby; 'I am sick at the very thought. But, my dear Clelia, go on, I beseech you, with your story.'

'I have not come to my own story yet,' said Miss Courteney; 'all that you have heard has been only an introduction to it; and I have given you the history of my parents in the words, as near as I can remember, of my mother; for she loved scribbling, and committed the principal incidents of her life to paper, which for my instruction she permitted me to read: I say instruction, for she was a woman of fine understanding and deep thinking; and she had interspersed through her little narrative many beautiful and just

‘just reflections, and many observations and useful maxims, such as her reading, which was very comprehensive, and her experience, furnished her with.’

‘Proceed, my dear Clelia,’ said Miss Woodby, observing Henrietta paused here; ‘I am impatient to hear more.’—‘If you please,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘we will drink tea first.’—‘I have just two hours to stay with you,’ replied Miss Woodby, looking at her watch; ‘if I am at home by nine o’clock, which is my aunt’s hour for supper, it will do.’ Henrietta then ordered tea, which was soon dispatched, and she resumed her story in this manner.

‘My father, who was very desirous of conciliating his elder brother’s affections at least, wrote to him, he being now upon his travels, and gave him an account of his marriage; but his letter, though conceived in the most tender and respectful terms, produced a cruel and supercilious answer, which not only took away all hope of his proving a mediator between him and his father, but proved that he had in him no longer a friend or brother.

‘His affairs were in this desperate situation when my mother became pregnant. A distant relation of my father’s now took an interest in this event, and being very rich and ambitious of making a family, he declared that, if the child was a son, he would adopt him and make him his heir. You may imagine this design was received with great joy: the old gentleman was very assiduous in his visits to my mother during her pregnancy, and seemed extremely happy in the thoughts of perpetuating his name; an ambition very common to persons of low extraction, who, by industry and thrift, have risen to great riches: for he was only by marriage a relation to my father, and had been too much neglected on account of the meanness of his original. But all these flattering expectations were destroyed by my birth, which I had reason to say proved a misfortune to my parents. The capricious old man was so greatly chagrined at his disappointment, that he transferred all his favours to another cousin, who was so lucky as to present him with a son to succeed to his for-

‘tune, and continue his obscure name to posterity.

‘My brother’s birth happened a year afterwards; and unfortunately for him a year too late. My father still continued to draw his whole income from the bounty of his mother, who was a constant but fruitless mediator in his behalf: her death, which happened about three years after his marriage, was an irreparable loss to him; for it was not improbable but the lenient hand of time, which weakens the force of every passion, joined to her tender solicitations, might have effected a reconciliation between his father and him; but this hope was now no more: the countess bequeathed my father all the money she had saved, which was but a very small sum; for she had always given with a liberal hand to the poor, though with so little ostentation, that it was supposed she had saved some thousands out of her pin-money, for she was less expensive than any other woman of her rank in England; but it was not till after my father’s marriage that she began to save, and then only for him,

‘Six hundred pounds was all that was found in her cabinet, which some months after her decease was paid to my father with every circumstance of contempt.

‘These repeated calamities were so far from lessening the love of my father and mother, that they seemed to redouble their tenderness; seeking in each other that happiness which fortune denied them, and which they were always sure to find in their own virtue and mutual affection.

‘My father, who had had a very liberal education, employed the greatest part of his time in the instruction of his children: under his tuition I acquired the French and Italian languages; by my mother I was taught every useful accomplishment for a young woman in my situation; nor did my father’s narrow circumstances hinder him from procuring me those which were suitable to my birth. My brother had no other tutor but this excellent father, who qualified him for an university; and at fourteen years of age he was sent to that of Leyden, and I have never seen him since.

‘In the mean time the earl my grandfather, who still continued inexorable,

' was taken off suddenly by an apopleck tick fit; and having never altered his will, which he made immediately after the marriage of my father, he found he was cut off with a shilling. This stroke, as it was always expected, was less sensibly felt than another which immediately followed it. That relation, to whose estate my father was to succeed, having buried his wife, married a young woman, who in a year afterwards brought him a son to inherit his fortune.

' My father, now seeing no prospect of any provision for his children, fell into a deep melancholy: he had, by the interest of some of his friends, obtained a place which brought him in between three and four hundred a year; but out of this it was impossible to save much. The uneasiness of mind which he laboured under corrupted his blood; he was seized with a decay, which carried him off in a few months, and deprived his wife of the best husband, his children of the best father that ever was.

' In his last illness he had wrote to his brother, and recommended his helpless family to his compassion; but that nobleman, whose avarice was his strongest passion, and whose resentment against his brother was kept up by the arts of his wife, her family, though noble, being very poor, and therefore dependent upon him, took no other notice of my father's last request, than to send my mother a bank bill for an hundred pounds; declaring at the same time, that it was all the assistance she must ever expect from him; and with this heroick act of generosity he silenced the soft pleadings of nature, and persuaded himself that he had done his duty.

' My mother, being young with child when my father died, miscarried; and by that accident, together with her continual grief, she fell into a languishing illness, which threatened a short period to her days. Eight hundred pounds was all that my father left: from this small sum a widow and two children were to draw their future subsistence. What a melancholy prospect! However, my brother, who was then about seventeen, had made such great proficiency in learning, that, notwithstanding his youth, he was recom-

mended by the professors of the university to have the care of some English youths who studied there, which afforded him a decent subsistence.

' My mother having placed eight hundred pounds in the hands of a rich merchant, a man of birth and liberal education, who had been a friend of my father's, and gave her very good interest for it, she disposed of all her furniture, and with the money arising from the sale, set out with me for Bath, the waters being prescribed to her by her physician.

' Not being able to support the expence of living in the town, she took lodgings in a pleasant village, about three miles distant from it; and here, feeling her distemper daily gaining ground, she prepared for death, with a resignation that was only interrupted by her anxiety for me.

' It was not indeed easy to form any plan for my future subsistence, which would not subject me to a situation very unfit for my birth. Had my brother been provided for, she would have made no scruple of sinking that small sum that was left into an annuity for my life, which with economy might support me above necessity and dependence. She wrote to my brother, and desired his advice with regard to me. My brother, as if he had entered into her views, in his answer conjured her to have no solicitude about him, since, with the education he had received, he could not fail of supporting himself in the character of a gentleman, but to dispose of that money in any manner which might be most for my advantage.

' My mother shed tears of tender satisfaction over this letter, so full of duty to her, and affection for me; but the more generous and disinterested appeared her son, the less was she capable of taking a resolution, which, if any disappointment happened to him, must leave him without any resource.

' You may be sure, my dear Miss Woodby, I was not very forward to fix her purpose; for I could not bear the thought of being the only person, in our little distressed family, to whom a subsistence was secured. While my mother was thus fluctuating, she was visited in her retirement by Lady Manning, a widow lady of a very plentiful fortune,

fortune, with whom she had been in some degree of intimacy during the life of my father.

This lady shewed great fondness for me; and my mother imparting to her her difficulties with regard to settling me, Lady Manning begged her to make herself quite easy, for that she would take me under her own care.

"Miss Courteney," said she, "will do me honour by accepting my house for an asylum, and I and my daughter will think ourselves happy in such an agreeable companion." My mother was extremely pleased with this offer; and Lady Manning pressed me to go with her to London, for which place she was to set out in a few days.

I was so much shocked at the proposal of leaving my mother in the dangerous condition she was judged to be, that I did not receive Lady Manning's offer with that sense of her intended kindness which she doubtless expected; and when my mother, wholly governed by the consideration of my interest, urged me to go with Lady Manning, I burst into a violent passion of tears, vehemently protesting that I would never leave her; and lamenting her causeless distrust of my affection, in supposing that I could be prevailed upon, by any prospect of advantage to myself, to separate from her.

I observed Lady Manning reddened at these words, which she understood as a reproach for her making so improper a proposal, and which I really desired she should: for I was highly disgusted with her want of delicacy, in desiring me to leave my mother, and believing it possible that I could consent.

I saw pleasure in my mother's eyes at this artless expression of my tenderness for her; but at the same time I thought I could perceive by the turn of her countenance that she was apprehensive I had disobliged Lady Manning: therefore I endeavoured to re-

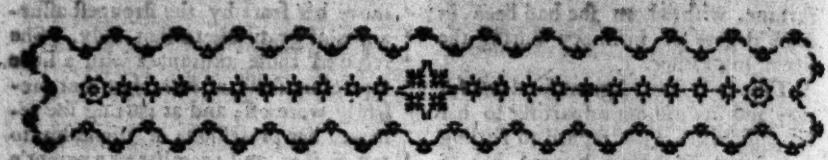
move her fears by the strongest assurances of gratitude to that lady. She received those assurances with a little superciliousness at first, but that presently wore off; and at parting she renewed her professions of friendship to my mother, and promises of a parent's care of me.

She left Bath three days afterwards, so that we did not see her again, which made my mother a little uneasy; but we had soon a very kind letter from her, in which she repeated all her former offers, and expressed great tenderness for me.

At her return from London, she passed through Bath in her way to her country-seat; and, finding my mother much worse, she redoubled her professions of affection for me, and was so lavish in her promises, that she left her quite easy on my account. Indeed, notwithstanding what I have suffered from Lady Manning, I shall ever think myself obliged to her for contributing so greatly towards that composure of mind which my mother felt, from the time that she thought me secure of a retreat, till it would suit with my brother's circumstances to take me under his own care.

"I will not, my dear Miss Woodby, enlarge upon the last three months of my mother's life, which were spent in a constant preparation for her end. Indeed, the innocence of her manners, and the unfeigned piety that shone through her conduct, made her whole life one continued preparation for that awful moment, so dreadful to the wicked; so full of peace, confidence, and holy joy, to the good. In fine, I lost this excellent mother, and my bleeding heart still feels her loss."

The tears, which at this tender remembrance flowed from Miss Courteney's eyes, made a pathetick pause in her relation; but recovering herself, she proceeded, as will be found in the following book,



HENRIETTA.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA ENTERS
UPON HER OWN STORY, AND
SHOWS, THAT TO CONFER BE-
NEFITS, IS NOT ALWAYS A PROOF
OF BENEVOLENCE.



HE worthy merchant, re-
sumed Miss Courteney,
' whom I mentioned to
' you, had the goodness
' to come to Bath, upon
' the news of my mother's
' extreme danger. He arrived time
' enough to receive her last intreaties,
' that he would continue his friendship
' to me. I was then entered into my
' twentieth year, and chose him for my
' guardian; he would have taken me
' with him to his house, but my promise
' being engaged to Lady Manning, I
' was obliged to decline his obliging
' offer.

' I sent her an account of my mother's
' death. Mr. Damer, so was the mer-
' chant called, would not return to
' town till he saw me safely disposed of.

' About three days after I had written
' to Lady Manning, I received a letter
' from her, which was brought by one
' of her servants; in which, after the
' usual compliments of condolence, she
' desired I would set out immediately
' with the person whom she had sent to
' attend me. My guardian, for so I
' used now to call Mr. Damer, coming
' in, I told him I must prepare to be
' gone immediately, and gave him Lady
' Manning's letter to read,

"How are you to go, Miss?" said he,
' after he had looked over the letter.
' As I never doubted but Lady Man-
' ning had sent her post-chaise or cha-
' riot for me, I told him I supposed
' there was a carriage come with the
' messenger.

"O yes," replied Mr. Damer, "there
' is a very good pillion, and you are to
' ride behind the footman. I took
' notice of the equipage as I came in,
' but I shall not permit you to perform
' a journey of thirty miles in that man-
' ner: therefore, Miss, I would have
' you send a letter to the lady by her
' messenger, and inform her that your
' guardian will convey you safe to her
' seat."

' I was as much pleased with this kind
' attention in Mr. Damer, as I was
' shocked and surprised at the ungentle
' manner in which Lady Manning had
' sent for me; however, I concealed my
' thoughts of it, and wrote such a letter
' as my guardian desired me. The next
' morning at eight o'clock, a post-chaise
' was ready at the door, and Mr. Damer
' attending; all my cloaths had been
' packed up the night before, and we
' set out immediately.

' Lady Manning received us very po-
' litely, and detained Mr. Damer to din-
' ner. I thought I could observe some-
' thing forced in the respect she seemed
' to pay me; and I was particularly dis-
' gusted with her using the words *your*
' guardian every moment, as if in de-
' rision of the title I had to one.

' When Mr. Damer went away, he
' took an opportunity to speak to me
' apart, and made me promise him, if
' I should

"I should have any reason to be displeased with my situation, that I would write to him plainly, and he would come himself and fetch me away. This tender solicitude in the good old man affected me very sensibly; and I could not help shedding tears when I saw him drive away.

"Lady Manning was extremely inquisitive about his connexion with me, and asked me a great many questions. "I am very glad," said she, "your affairs are in the hands of so wise a man; for surely, he who can raise a large estate out of a trifle, as has been the case with Mr. Damer, must needs be a very wise man; and I don't doubt but he will manage your fortune to the best advantage."

"I was greatly displeased with the first part of this speech, and particularly with the manner in which the word Fortune was drauded out.

"The poor trifle I have, Madam," replied I, "does not deserve to be termed a fortune."

"I assure you," said she, "it was very kind in a man of Mr. Damer's substance to trouble himself with such inconsiderable matters; and it is a great thing for you to be permitted to call such a man Guardian."

"Very true, Madam," replied I, with some warmth; "and I believe Mr. Damer thinks it no discredit to be called so by a child of Mr. Courteney's, whatever her fortune may be."

"I observed Lady Manning to redder at this reply, which at that time surprised me, and I could not conceive the reason of it; but I soon found that it was a mortal crime, in her eyes, to pretend to derive any advantage from birth. There was nothing which she seemed to hold in greater contempt than family-pride; and indeed, when unseasonably exerted, it is contemptible; but it was plain that Lady Manning did not think meanly of the fortuitous advantage of being well-born, because she envied those who possessed that advantage; and, though the daughter of a soap-boiler herself, she was extremely fond of being thought to have ancestors; and it was to gratify her pride, that her husband, who was a rich citizen, by trade a brewer, got himself knighted, that, together with a very large jointure, he might leave his wife the title of Lady."

"Surely," interrupted Miss Woodby, "this woman had no good intentions when she invited you to her house: it is impossible that such low creatures can have any notion of friendship or generosity."

"You have guessed truly," replied Miss Courteney; "it was to gratify her pride, to have the daughter of a gentleman subjected to her caprice, and dependent on her bounty, that made her so solicitous to have me with her: but although I did not make these reflections immediately, yet I was so disgusted by this first conversation, that I could not promise myself any great happiness in such society."

"Her daughter was now introduced to me, a tall awkward thing about seventeen: she was an heiress; and being taught to believe that riches give birth, beauty, wit, and every desirable quality, she held every one in contempt who was not possessed of this advantage; and because she had it herself, she supposed she had all the others."

"Whatever documents were given her, they were always introduced with— "Consider, Miss, what a fortune you are!—A young lady of your fortune!" How was it possible for a girl, thus tutored, not to derive insolence from the consideration of her fortune?

"The governess, who had the care of this young lady, was not very likely to enlarge her notions: her only recommendation to such a trust was, that she could jabber corrupted French without either sense or grammar, and Miss was taught to *parler françoise* in a broad provincial dialect; for this governess had never seen Paris, and perhaps had never been out of the little village where she was born and bred, and conversed only with peasants, till she came to England to teach language and fine breeding to a rich heiress. It was very natural for Lady Manning to make such a choice, who doubtless thought it a great distinction to have a foreigner for governess to her daughter."

"Nay, my dear," interrupted Miss Woodby, "Lady Manning, in this particular, does not differ from many persons of the first quality, who commit the education of their daughters to low vulgar creatures, merely because they are French; creatures that, in Paris,

Paris, or in any of the chief cities in the provinces, would not be thought qualified for a chambermaid to a woman of any fashion, when driven into England on account of their religion, as they all pretend, though perhaps it is for want of bread in their own country, derive such distinction from their flimsy sacks, their powdered hair, and their speaking French, that they are thought the fittest persons in the world to form the manners of young girls of quality. How absurd should we think it in a French woman of quality to entertain an awkward Yorkshire girl with a coarse clownish accent, as English governess to her daughter, to teach her the language, and correct her pronunciation? And yet not one in twenty of the Mademoiselles in the houses of our nobility and our French boarding-schools are better qualified for such an office. But I beg pardon, my dear, for interrupting you so long: I long to hear what sort of a life you lived in this rich despicable family.

Truly, said Miss Courteney, it was not very agreeable. When Lady Manning and I were alone, she used to entertain me with an account of her forefathers; she reckoned up among them half a dozen sheriffs, three lord-mayors, and a long train of aldermen. She lamented the death of her husband most pathetically; for if he had lived two years longer, he would have been elected lord-mayor, and she would have lived in the Mansion-house, and been queen of the city. These were her words.

When we were at table, and the servants attending, she used to turn the discourse upon the misfortunes of my father, lament the sad condition to which my mother and I were reduced by his death, express great anxiety about my brother, and enter into a minute discussion of our affairs.

When there was company present, she would take notice that I was melancholy, and tell me that I must not take misfortunes to heart, and then sigh as if she was extremely affected with them herself; by which she recommended me to her visitors as an object of compassion, and never failed by that means to produce some instances of neglect towards me: so powerfully did that consideration operate upon most minds.

She would sharply reprehend her daughter for any supposed want of civility to me, and pass over in silence any real one; telling her, that if Miss Courteney had not a fortune, yet she was a gentlewoman as well as herself, and that nobody should be despised for being poor.

Such were the continued mortifications that I was obliged to endure from this generous benefactress; yet I ought not to call them mortifications, because they only excited my contempt. About that time I received a letter from my brother, in which he informed me that he was going to travel with a young English nobleman, whose governor had died suddenly at Leyden, and whom he was appointed to succeed upon a very advantageous footing, on account of his birth: he desired me to draw upon him for what money I had occasion for.

I received these insults therefore with the more indifference, as I knew I could put an end to them when I pleased, by quitting Lady Manning's house, which I could now do without any inconvenience to myself; and, foreseeing that this indelicacy in her treatment of me must necessarily end in something too coarse for me to dissemble my resentment, I was willing to stay till she shewed herself in her true colours, which would be my justification whenever I quitted her.

CHAP. II.

WHEREIN FAMILY-PRIDE AWAKENS
THOSE NATURAL AFFECTIONS
WHICH FAMILY-PRIDE HAD SUP-
PRESSED.

IT was not long before I had this opportunity. She desired me one day to walk with her in the garden, having something to communicate to me greatly to my advantage; and, after a profound silence of about ten minutes, she looked archly at me, and asked me if I could guess what she had been doing for me. "Indeed I cannot, Madam," replied I. "Well, then, I will tell you," said she; "nothing less, I assure you, than providing you a husband."—"Indeed!" said I, laughing; "and pray, Madam, who is this intended husband?"—"Come, come," said she, gravely, "be-
fore

"fore I tell you who he is, you must promise to make no silly objections; such as age, not being a fine gentleman, and the like. The person I have in my eye for you is a sober staid man, and blessed with means to support you handsomely, without depending upon any body."—"That indeed is something!" replied I; "but who is this person, Madam?"—"I have a good mind," said she, "to tantalize you a little, by keeping you in suspense: but, in short, the person I mean is honest Mr. Jones."

"Although I expected some very absurd and impertinent proposal, yet my imagination had never reached any thing so ridiculous as this Mr. Jones; for I had had his history from himself some time before. He had been taken by her father out of a parish-school, because he understood writing and accounts, to keep his books for him. Upon his young mistress's marriage, he was advanced to be a clerk in her husband's office; and here, having scraped up a little money, he made some successful ventures in trade, and had acquired about two thousand pounds. After Sir John's death, my lady made him her steward, with a salary of fifty pounds a year; and he was in this honourable and lucrative post when she proposed him as a husband for me."

"My surprize was succeeded by a strong inclination to laugh, which, indeed, I took no pains to suppress. "And pray, Madam," said I, "has this grave personage expressed any good liking to me?"

"I hope you are not jesting," said she. "Why, did you expect me to be serious," replied I, "upon such a proposal?"

"Such a proposal, Miss!" repeated Lady Manning, colouring; "if my daughter was in your circumstances, I should not be sorry such a proposal was made to her."—"Very likely, Madam," returned I; "and it might be more proper than to Mr. Courteney's daughter, and the niece of the Earl of —"

"This may look like vanity, my dear Miss Woodby; but I confess I was excessively shocked at her levelling me with her daughter, when riches were out of the question; for I was contented to allow her all the superiority she could derive from them. Lady

Manning made me a smarter answer, and delivered with more calmness than I expected from her."

"If the Earl of —," said she, "behaved more like an uncle to you, Miss, it would be oftener remembered that you are his niece; but, as it is, I do not know whether it may not be an advantage to you to have it forgot; for there are very few gentlemen of small fortunes who would chuse an indigent woman of quality for a wife."

"I hope, however, Madam," said I, "that none but a gentleman will presume to offer himself to me; and I shall take care not to justify my uncle's neglect, by encouraging any improper address."—"You are very much in the right, Miss," said Lady Manning; "one unfortunate marriage in a family is enough."

"Tis well, Madam," replied I, bursting into tears; "you mean my father's, no doubt; but it was no other wife unfortunate than that it had not the sanction of my grandfather's consent: my mother's excellencies justified his choice; and she might have had a fortune too, though not equal to what he might have expected, if it had not been trusted in the hands of a villain, who broke to leave his own children fortunes, as many other villains have done."

"This last hint threw Lady Manning into some confusion; for it was suspected that her grandfather, who was a corn-factor, had done the like: and, whether it was that she was afraid of my speaking still plainer, or that she was really concerned for having given me such just reason to complain of her, she thought fit to beg my pardon for what was past; and assured me, that whatever I might think of her, she was unalterably my friend."

"In my first emotions of resentment, I had resolved to write to Mr. Damer, and acquaint him with the treatment I had met with, which I knew would bring him immediately to my relief: but I considered that my leaving Lady Manning in disgust might have disagreeable consequences; for she would not fail to represent every thing in such a manner as to make me appear in the wrong; and the world seldom espouses the part of the oppressed; because they who oppress have that on their side

“ which is sure to exculpate them—they are rich. Besides, the summer was now almost past, and she talked of going soon to London, where I could take an opportunity of leaving her without any noise, and of putting myself immediately under my guardian’s protection; but I was delivered from this disagreeable situation sooner than I expected, and by means which I had then no reason to hope for.

“ Lady Manning was desirous of spending a few weeks at Bath before she returned to London. A lady happened to be there at that time, who, I afterwards learned, was my great aunt by my father’s side, and had followed the example of every branch of his family, in taking no notice of him after his marriage.

“ This lady, Lady Manning became acquainted with; and not knowing the relation in which she stood to me, she began one day to exclaim against the pride and folly of people, in low circumstances, who expect to be considered on account of their birth, producing me as an instance, and relating how I had refused an honest man whom she had proposed to me for a husband, because he was not a gentleman, repeating my own words with a sneer; and therefore—*Not a proper match for Mr. Courteney’s daughter.*

“ This being the first time she had named me, Lady Meadows (for it was her) cried out, in some astonishment—“ What, Madam, is that pretty young lady,” (so she was pleased to say) “ that I saw with you once in the rooms, Mr. Courteney’s daughter?”

“ Lady Manning answering in the affirmative—“ Good Heaven!” said Lady Meadows, “ and have I lived to hear one of my family spoken of with such contempt?”

“ One of your family. Madam!” interrupted Lady Manning, surprized.

“ Yes,” said Lady Meadows, “ one of my family, who has done you too much honour to accept of an obligation from you: how could you presume to propose your scoundrel steward for a husband to my niece? But I will take her out of your hands immediately: you shall be paid for her board; my nephew’s daughter shall not lie under an obligation to any upstart cit.”

“ It is not to be doubted that Lady Manning replied with great bitterness; but Lady Meadows, from whom I afterwards had these particulars, was in too much emotion to listen to her. She immediately quitted the walk, for they were on the Parade; and getting into her chariot, told Lady Manning that she was going to her lodgings to fetch me away.

“ Thus, my dear Miss Woodby, did I recover a relation, a friend, a benefactress, in a woman, who for many years had had no intercourse with my father, and disclaimed him, as the rest of his relations had done, on account of his marriage: she, whose resentment could not be softened by time, whose compassion could not be awakened by distress; she who had silenced the soft pleadings of nature, yet listened to the voice of pride; and, from a sense of the affront that had been offered her family in the husband proposed to me, she did all that benevolence would have suggested to a better mind.

“ You may imagine I was greatly surprized, when a servant informed me that Lady Meadows was at the door in her chariot, and desired I would come to her. I had often heard my father mention this aunt of his, from whom, before his marriage, he had great expectations. I went down stairs in much confusion of mind, not knowing what this summons could mean, yet presaging some good; and as soon as I appeared, Lady Meadows let down the glass, and desired me to come into the chariot. Her footman instantly opening the door, I got in, and placed myself by her, expecting when she would speak, and anxiously longing for an explanation.

“ Lady Meadows gazed at me in silence during some moments; then taking my hand—“ My dear,” said she, in a tender accent, “ you are very like your father. Poor Ned!” added she, with some emotion, “ he was not kindly used.” The tears streamed from my eyes at this mention of my father. I observed Lady Meadows was greatly affected. “ Oh Nature!” thought I, “ why were thy tender feelings suppressed so long?”—“ Don’t weep, my dear,” said she; “ I will be both father and mother to you.”

“ Had

"Had I been in another place, I should have thrown myself at her feet, to express my gratitude for this affectionate promise. I could not speak at that moment; I took her hand, kissed it, and wet it with my tears. She kindly wiped my eyes with her own handkerchief; then looking again in my face, as if with pleasure—"You are like your mother too, I suppose," said she: "I never saw her; but I have heard that she was very handsome."

"This obliging manner of mentioning my mother, which I so little expected from her, quite subdued me. "My dear," said she, "what is past cannot be helped; you are my daughter now; you shall be no longer obliged to Lady Manning. That woman," pursued she, rising in her temper as she spoke, "has herself told me the insolence of her treatment of you." She then gave me an account of what had passed upon the Parade, as I have already related to you.

"Lady Manning thought to have injured me in your opinion," said I; "and she has made me happy, by awakening your tenderness for me: I now forgive her for all her insults."

"But I never will forgive her," interrupted Lady Meadows. "As soon as we come to my lodgings, you shall send for your cloaths, and never more enter her doors."

"I was very unwilling to part with Lady Manning in this manner, and pressed my aunt to allow me to go and take leave of her civilly; but she positively refused, and I found she could not endure the least contradiction, which is indeed one of her foibles. I therefore contented myself with writing to her, and acquainted her with Lady Meadows's resolution in my favour: I made the best apology I could for leaving her so suddenly, and expressed some concern at the misunderstanding there was between Lady Meadows and her, which made it impossible for me to wait on her.

"Politeness, my dear, is sometimes a great tax upon sincerity. Lady Manning had certainly treated me very ill, and, in strict justice, I was not obliged to shew any respect to a woman who had violated all the laws of hospitality with regard to me: but custom de-

cides arbitrarily in these cases; and persons, in a certain condition of life, make a science of hating one another with all the good-breeding and complaisance imaginable.

"Lady Manning, according to this rule, returned a civil answer to my letter, wished me all happiness, and, wherever she went, let loose all the asperity of her tongue against me. One calumny propagated by her hurt me more than the rest: she confidently reported that I had sacrificed my conscience to my interest; and that, upon my aunt's promising to settle her whole fortune upon me at her death, I had turned Roman Catholic; for Lady Meadows had been perverted to that religion by her husband, and, like all profelytes, was extremely bigotted to her new principles.

"I thought it became me to discountenance this report as much as possible; therefore I was more regular than ever in my attendance at church: and although my aunt, after we came to London, would often have engaged me to go to mass with her, intending, no doubt, to work me to her purpose by degrees; yet I constantly and steadily refused to gratify her in this particular, though in every other I studied to oblige her as much as possible. She would often engage me in arguments upon the subject of religion, which I generally strove to evade; and when I found that would not do, I defended myself with great courage, and with so much success, that she would tell me with an air, half smiling, half angry, I was too hard for her, and that she would consign me over to her chaplain.

"This chaplain, whose name is Danvers, is a priest of the order of the Jesuits: he had been recommended to Lady Meadows by her late husband, whose memory she adored; and this powerful interest, joined to the Jesuit's insinuating manners, acquired him so great credit with Lady Meadows, that she governed herself wholly by his advice; and that the great work of her salvation might be perfected, and her every word and action be under his direction, he lived in the house with her, where he ruled in a most arbitrary manner; his absolute empire over the conscience of my lady, ren-

'dering his dominion over all that had any dependance on her as uncontroled as he could desire.'

Here Henrietta stopped, observing her friend to look at her watch, which produced an exclamation that the reader will find in the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

WHICH INTRODUCES A JESUIT TO THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE READER.

'OH! my dear,' cried Miss Woodby, 'I am in despair to find it is so late, I must leave you now; but I am so impatient to hear the rest of your story, that, if you will give me leave, I will breakfast with you to-morrow, and as soon as my eager curiosity is satisfied, we will go together to Mrs. Egret's.'

She then desired a chair might be sent for; 'And in the mean time,' said she, 'we will step into the shop; I will make a little purchase on purpose to see your landlady, whom you seem to dislike so much.'

'Indeed I do not like her,' replied Henrietta, 'and yet she is mighty civil.'—'Well,' said Miss Woodby, tripping down stairs, 'I'll give you my opinion of her when I have studied her a little.'

Miss Courteney was following her into the shop, when perceiving the young gentleman, who was there the day before, in discourse with Mrs. Eccles, she pulled Miss Woodby by the sleeve, whispering, 'Don't go in now, there is somebody with her.'—'Indeed, but I will,' replied Miss Woodby, who saw the glimpse of a laced coat, for which she had always a violent passion, 'and so shall you likewise.'

Saying this, she pulled Miss Courteney in, and, swimming up to Mrs. Eccles, bid her, with a lively air, show her some ribbands and blond laces.

The young gentleman, as soon as the ladies appeared, made them a profound bow; and, fixing his eyes on Henrietta's face, seemed to contemplate it with astonishment and delight.

Mean time Miss Woodby was playing over a thousand fantastick airs, and uttering as many pretty absurdities, which she had heard admired coming

from the mouths of beauties, without reflecting that she herself was no beauty. Mrs. Eccles perceived her foible immediately, and took occasion, when she was shewing her some new-fashioned caps, to tell her, that such a one would suit the air of her face; that this coloured ribband was most proper to shew the lustre of her eyes; observed that she had wonderful fine hair, and begged to know who cut it.

Henrietta, a little in pain for her friend, to whom personal compliments were by no means proper, endeavoured to relieve the confusion she supposed she was under, by diverting her attention to something else, and asked her opinion of some Dresden work that was lying before them. But Miss Woodby had no leisure to answer her; for the gentleman, conceiving that it was easier to introduce some conversation to her than to Miss Courteney, whose mingled modesty and dignity struck him with awe, addressed a trifling question to Miss Woodby, which she answered with such an affected sprightliness as encouraged him to talk to her with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

Miss Woodby was excessively delighted with his address to her, and played off all the artillery of eyes, air, and wit, upon him. Happy was it for the young gentleman, who courageously bore all her attacks, that this fire was given from two little grey eyes, over which her forehead hung like a precipice; and that this form, which was thrown into a thousand different attitudes to strike him, was so distorted by nature as to leave little more for affectation to do.

The chair had been waiting half an hour without Miss Woodby's perceiving it, when Henrietta, who was not at all pleased with the figure her friend made, told her, smiling, that she would not let her stay any longer, for fear she should by that means be disappointed of her company at breakfast the next day.

'I vow, my dear, you are in the right,' cried Miss Woodby, 'to send me away; for my aunt is waiting supper for me—I am a giddy creature.' She then desired Mrs. Eccles to put up the things she had bought; for, in the gaiety of her heart, she had bought a great many. Mrs. Eccles obeyed, telling her she hoped she should have the pleasure

pleasure of serving so agreeable a lady again.

The gentleman would hand her into her chair, which Miss Woodby accepted with a very gallant air, after she had assured Miss Courteney aloud, that she would be with her in the morning; and told her in a whisper, that her landlady was a very pretty behaved woman.

Henrietta went up to her chamber directly, to the great disappointment of the young gentleman, who, finding there was no probability of seeing her again that night, went away disburthened of a heart which he had left with the charming stranger.

She was now summoned to supper by Mrs. Eccles, who was full of praises of the young lady her visiter. 'This has been a lucky day to me,' said she, 'for I have let my first floor at a very good price, considering the season of the year.'—'I am glad of it,' said the young lady. 'That is very obliging of you, my dear Miss,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'and you may still have the use of the dining-room when you have company; for my lord will be seldom at home in the day, these lodgings being only to sleep in. But how do you like him? Is he not a mighty agreeable man? Dear soul! not a bit of pride in him!'

'Do you mean the gentleman I saw in the shop?' said Miss Courteney. 'Yes,' returned Mrs. Eccles, 'he is a lord, I assure you.'—'Well,' said Miss Courteney, 'I am glad you are not to lose one lodger without getting another, for I must leave you to-morrow.'—'How!' replied Mrs. Eccles, with an altered countenance, 'I hope you are only in jest.'—'Upon my word I am in earnest,' said Miss Courteney. 'I am sorry for it, Madam,' resumed she, 'but this is very short notice.'

Henrietta was a little surprized at the peevishness with which she spoke these last words, so different from her usual complaisance: but she would not seem to take notice of it, and only told her, that it was not her design to stay more than a few days at this end of the town, having affairs to transact in the city, which would oblige her for her own convenience to take lodgings there.

Mrs. Eccles appeared satisfied with this answer, though a cloud hung upon her brow during the whole time they were at supper, which Miss Courteney shortened

as much as possible, and retired to her chamber, with new prejudices against her landlady, that made her rejoice in the prospect of getting away the next day.

Miss Woodby came according to her promise to breakfast, in a world of spirits; and had scarce taken a seat, when she asked after the charming fellow who entertained her so agreeably in the shop.

Henrietta told her, she saw no more of him; 'for the moment you was gone,' said she, 'I went up stairs: but really, my dear, I wonder you seemed so pleased with his conversation; me thought it was very silly and trifling.'

'Oh!' exclaimed Miss Woodby, 'there is an inexpressible charm in the trifling chat of a pretty sensible fellow, when we know he submits to it only to please us women.'—'Truly,' said Miss Courteney, 'your sex is not obliged to you for that compliment. Must a man then talk nonsense to be acceptable to us?'—'Lord! how grave you are, my dear,' said Miss Woodby; 'why, don't you know that I am the veriest coquet in nature, and take an infinite pleasure in making a wise man look and talk like a fool?'

'A coquet, my dear!' interrupted Henrietta, surprized; 'no, surely.'—'Indeed but I am,' replied Miss Woodby; 'and I verily think I should not be in the least concerned to see a hundred men dying of love for me.'—'Indeed!' said Miss Courteney. 'Yes, indeed,' repeated the other; 'but why that stare of astonishment? are these notions so new to you?'—'Why, no,' hesitated Miss Courteney, whose astonishment arose from the contemplation of the figure which uttered all this extravagance, 'I have somewhere met in my course of reading with such fantastical notions, but I cannot say that I ever thought I should hear them avowed by a young lady of your good sense.'—'Oh! your servant for that compliment,' returned Miss Woodby, bowing; 'but on the article of vanity we are all fools. But come, my dear, make your tea, and then resume your story; for I die with impatience to hear it.'

'I wish you would excuse me,' said Henrietta, 'till I am got to Mrs. Egret's, for I shall not be easy till I am out of this house.'—'Why have you such a dislike to this house?' said Miss Woodby;

by; 'I protest I think your landlady a mighty civil, obliging woman.'— 'Well, I don't like her,' replied Henrietta; 'she has let her first floor all on a sudden to the gentleman we saw in the shop.'— 'And how does that affect you?' interrupted Miss Woodby.

Henrietta blushed at this question; she was not willing to own that she thought there was some design in his coming, and expected her friend would have made that inference herself; but finding she did not, she endeavoured to divert her attention from the hint she had dropped, by saying she had set her heart upon going to Mrs. Egret's, and had told Mrs. Eccles that she was to leave her to-day.

'That was very imprudently done of you,' said Miss Woodby, 'before you knew whether Mrs. Egret could accommodate you with lodgings; but own the truth now,' pursued she, 'did you not put yourself into a flutter upon hearing the gentleman had taken lodgings here?'

'Why, I cannot help saying I was startled at it,' replied Henrietta, 'and the more when I heard he was a man of quality; for surely these lodgings are much too mean for a person of that rank.'

'Is he a man of quality?' exclaimed Miss Woodby: 'Oh! the dear creature! I protest I am quite in love with him now; I doat on a man of quality. And pray, why should his coming fright you away? Ah! my dear,' said she, smiling archly, 'had I not reason for saying a moment ago, that on the article of vanity we are all fools? Now are you ready to imagine here is a plot between this young nobleman and Mrs. Eccles against your fair self. Poor lady!' pursued she, laughing, 'this presumptuous knight will certainly carry you away.'

'You are in a gay humour to-day,' said Miss Courteney, blushing; 'but, raillery a-part, it imports me greatly not to be known: this lord, as Mrs. Eccles says he is, will no doubt have a great many persons coming after him; I may be seen and discovered; and, if you knew what I have to dread in that case, I am sure you would think it reasonable for me to be desirous of leaving this house.'

'You will be in more danger of a

'discovery at Mrs. Egret's,' said Miss Woodby; 'her house is much larger than this, and she is very seldom without people of fashion in it.'— 'But I can keep in my chamber,' said Henrietta. 'And what hinders you from doing so here?' said Miss Woodby. 'Ah! it is as I suspected; you are certainly apprehensive of being conveyed to some island in an immense lake.'

'But, my dear Miss Woodby,' said Henrietta, laughing, 'why, have you changed your mind about my going to Mrs. Egret's?'— 'I have not changed my mind,' replied Miss Woodby; 'I am ready to do what I promised, but it is my opinion that if Mrs. Egret cannot furnish you with a lodging, you will be very safe here, and I will be with you as often as I can.'— 'Ah, my dear,' said Miss Courteney, mimicking the tone she had used to her; 'but come write a line to Mrs. Egret, to know if she has a single room to spare, and I shall be satisfied.'

Miss Woodby immediately complied with her request, and a porter was dispatched to St. James's Street, who soon returned with a billet from Mrs. Egret to Miss Woodby, expressing her concern that she could not accommodate her friend.

'Well,' said Henrietta, when she heard this, 'I find I must be contented to stay here a few days longer; but remember I claim your promise to be with me as often as you can.'— 'That you may depend upon,' said Miss Woodby; 'and now I claim your's to finish your history; I am impatient to hear how you came off with this doughty chaplain.'

CHAP. IV.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE ENGAGES HERSELF IN A VERY UNEQUAL CONTEST.

'I Must confess,' said Miss Courteney, resuming her narrative, 'that I had no inclination to engage in a religious dispute with a man whose learning and abilities furnished him with so many advantages over me; therefore, whenever he gave the conversation that turn, I generally took refuge in silence, not being willing to

hurt a cause I had so much at heart, by defending it weakly.

However, I was often drawn in to answer by some apparent absurdity advanced by him, which it seemed mighty easy to refute. On these occasions Mr. Danvers would listen to me with wonderful attention, observe the most minute exactness in his reply, as if what I had urged had indeed great force: nay, he would sometimes seem a little pressed by my arguments; pause for a few moments, as if he found it necessary to collect all his strength against so potent an adversary; and, after a well-turned compliment on my understanding, he would resume the argument, in which he never failed to puzzle, though he could not convince me; but always concluded with a declaration that I was too hard for him; and it was well he had the best side of the argument, for nothing but truth could stand against such subtilty of reasoning.

These praises always left me in a very good disposition to renew the subject whenever an opportunity offered. I began to be extremely fond of disputing with the chaplain; and, instead of shunning it, as I used to do, I even invited his opposition.

I have heard it observed, that vanity cheats many a woman out of her honour; I am sure it was well nigh cheating me out of my religion; for this Jesuit, by his insidious praises, had given me such a confidence in my talent of reasoning, that I began to believe, if he did not make a proselyte of me, I should certainly make one of him; and, in my eager pursuit of victory, I sometimes engaged myself beyond my strength, and received such checks, that if my faith was not overthrown, yet it was strangely staggered: but some disgust which I took to the manners of the chaplain preserved me from the poison of his doctrine, and made me lose all my relish for arguing with him.

My aunt, who was certainly very desirous of my conversion, was much pleased with her chaplain's zeal to forward so great a work; and, that she might give no interruption to our discourse, she would often leave us alone for several hours together.

At such times, the Jesuit would be

very lavish of his compliments and praises; of which my person would even come in for a share. He would gaze on my face till he lost the chain of his discourse, and, by his inattention to what he was saying, gave me many advantages over him; and often, while he was pursuing his argument with great warmth, he would lay his hand on mine, hold it for several minutes together, and press it so violently, that I could hardly help crying out.

All this, however, would not have startled me; but one day, taking occasion, upon something I had said, to break into an exclamation of surprize at my prodigious understanding, he kissed my hand in a kind of rapture; and having once taken this liberty, he repeated it several times, to my great confusion and surprize.

There are suspicions, my dear, which, against persons of a certain character, one dare not even avow to one's self. I was shocked, yet would not venture to examine why; I could never endure to be alone with him, yet never asked myself the reason; my eyes, as it were, mechanically avoided his; his civilities were odious to me. If he enquired after my health, I answered him coldly, without knowing I did so; and when he launched into any of his usual praises, I was downright rude to him, yet scarce perceived it myself.

I now so carefully shunned being alone with him, that notwithstanding he sought opportunities of engaging me in private, which heightened my disgust, yet he never could find any. This conduct, if he had any guilt in his heart, must certainly give him cause to think I had detected it; and indeed I soon found, by my aunt's altered behaviour, that he was endeavouring to undermine me in her affection.

The little peevishness I observed in her towards me, I imputed at first to her chagrin at my having disappointed her wishes in not becoming a convert to that religion she professed; but I soon found that she had been made to conceive strange notions of me. She objected to the gaiety of my disposition; she did not like that crowd of lovers, as she phrased it, that followed me, and

and were encouraged by my coquet airs, and the pleasure I shewed in being admired.

It is certain, that the report of the fortune my aunt designed for me, procured me addresses from several men, whom as she did not approve, so neither did I encourage; having, in reality, none of that sort of vanity which is gratified by a great many pretenders of this kind, nor did I feel the least partiality to any one of them; so that I told her it would give me no uneasiness if she forbid their visits for the future, which, since I found they were disagreeable to her, I would have done myself, if I had thought it became me to take that liberty in her house. This declaration would not satisfy my aunt: she had further views; I must marry, and she must chuse a husband for me, without leaving me, in an affair that so nearly concerned my happiness, even a negative voice.

I have no doubt but that the person she pitched upon was recommended to her by the chaplain; he was a Roman Catholick baronet, had a large estate, was not much above sixty years of age, his person just not horrible, and he was not quite a fool. This was the man whom my aunt proposed to me, or rather commanded me to accept; for he had modesty enough not to try to engage my affections, till he had secured her consent, and was admitted in form to make his addresses to me.

My aunt indeed allowed that there was some disproportion in our years; but then he had a good estate, and I was wholly dependent upon her; his person, she acknowledged, was not very amiable, but he was a baronet, and could give me a title. "To be sure," she said, "he was not a man of bright parts, but he would make a good settlement on me;" and concluded with assuring me, that my cheerful consent would greatly endear me to her, which I should find by the disposition she would make in her will.

My aunt, having thus anticipated every objection I could make, and, in her opinion, fully answered them all, I thought it would be to no purpose to dispute with her on points already decided; I therefore contented myself with declaring, that I could not like Sir Isaac Darby (for that was his name;) that I should be miserable if I married

him; that I was extremely happy in my present situation, and had no wish to change it.

Lady Meadows, I perceived, was a little offended at this so positive declaration; but I had nothing for it but steadiness. "I expected," said she, "more compliance from that sweetness I have been fond of supposing in your temper; and from your good sense, a greater attention to your own interest." I assured her, that it was and ever should be my sincere endeavour to avoid offending her; that I would admit no offer but such as she should approve; and that I would guard my heart against any preference which was not authorised by her: more than this I told her was not in my power to promise, for no consideration of interest could prevail upon me to give my hand to a man whom it was impossible for me either to love or esteem.

Finding she listened to me patiently, I urged every argument my imagination could furnish me with, to prove to her that such an engagement, entered into upon pecuniary motives only, could not be happy, and might be very miserable. I begged she would not think of disposing of me in marriage, till I seemed less satisfied with my present happy lot; and that, by giving me no superior duties in domestic life to fulfil, she might entitle herself to all my undivided cares, affection, and assiduity.

My aunt seemed affected with what I said: she told me she had no intention to force my inclination; that, loving me so well as she did, it was natural for her to wish to see me settled; that Sir Isaac Darby was a very advantageous offer; she recommended to me to consider well what I refused, and to conquer my unreasonable dislike of him if possible.

"If it were possible, Madam," replied I, "your command would make me attempt it, but—" "No more buts now, Henrietta," interrupted my aunt; "Sir Isaac dines here to-day; remember I expect you will treat him civilly at least, since he has so great a regard for you."

I smiled, curtsied, and went out of the room where this long conversation had been held, for I heard the chaplain's step in my aunt's dressing-room; and

and this being the hour when he generally joined us, I chose to avoid seeing him then, for fear he should prevail upon her to exact something more than civility from me to the odious wretch, who had thus bartered for me without my consent.

I did not appear in the dining-room till dinner was ready to be served; my antiquated lover approached with a janty air, and a sliding bow; and (O! don't you pity me, my dear) kissed my hand, as he led me to my seat. Nothing but the respect I owed my aunt could have hindered me from laughing at this ridiculous display of gallantry in the old man; for age has no claim to our reverence, if not accompanied by those qualities from whence it derives it's worth. Wisdom, gravity, experience, the triumph of reason over passions, prejudice, and folly; all these we expect to find in fulness of years, and these make it's wrinkles not only respectable but even lovely.

In Sir Isaac Darby, age was contemptible as well as unlovely; he wanted to be young, in spite of time; he talked and laughed aloud; he strutted about the room; he adjusted his bag, for he was drest up to five and twenty; he hummed a tune: I sat staring with astonishment at him.

From what had passed between my aunt and I in the morning, I had no reason to imagine that Sir Isaac would be treated as a declared and authorised lover; but some time after dinner was over, Mr. Danvers withdrew, and my aunt, upon some trifling pretence, following him, I was left alone with the old baronet. I would instantly have quitted the room; but, remembering that my aunt had required civility of me at least, I resolved not to affront him, by leaving him to himself; and since I was obliged to stay, I would draw some amusement from the ridiculous scene before me.

I know not whether it was from any particular archness in my looks just then, (for I had composed my countenance to a kind of forced gravity) or whether the old man was at a loss in what manner he should form his address; but it is certain, that all his confidence seemed now, for the first time, to forsake him, and he sat silent

during several minutes, stealing a glance at me every now and then; while I, with a formal air, played my fan, and increased his confusion by my silence. At length he quitted his own chair for that which my aunt had sat in, and which was next me; and drawing it still nearer to me, he made a motion to take my hand, which I withdrew as hastily as if a snake had touched it.

This action a little disconcerted him; but taking courage again, after a prelude hem, he began—"Charming Miss Courteney, I don't doubt but Lady Meadows has informed you of the violence of my—" Here an unlucky cough interrupted his speech, and held him so long, that he grew black in the face; his endeavours to suppress it having, as I believe, almost choked him. I rose up in a seeming fright, as if I had designed to call for assistance; but finding his cough had ceased, I sat down again at a greater distance than before.

"I fancy the town air does not agree with you, Sir," said I; "it is certainly very bad for asthmatical disorders."

"Oh, Madam!" said he, "this is no asthma. I got a slight cold the other night at Spring Gardens; for we staid very late, and the ground was damp: but I came off better than any of my companions, two or three of whom are still laid up with colds. But tell me, dear Miss Courteney, did you receive favourably the declaration your aunt made in my name? May I hope, or am I doomed to despair?" whined out the superannuated innamorato, with an hideous ogle, which he designed for a languish.

"Oh, good Sir," replied I, excessively shocked at his folly, "these Areadian strains do not become your wisdom and gravity. My aunt did mention your proposals to me, but I cannot accept them, I have no inclination to change my condition."

"How admirably this pretty seriousness sits on those sweet features!" said the wretch, looking confidently at me, without being in the least mortified with my rebuke. "But, my dear Miss Courteney, you must change your mind—indeed you must—and your condition too, my fair one."

F

"Perhaps

"Perhaps I may, Sir," said I.

"Oh, that charming perhaps!" said he, "it restores me to life."

"Was there ever any thing so provoking, my dear? I protest I could hardly help abusing the ridiculous old man."

"I really think, Sir," said I, looking at him with infinite contempt, "that my seriousness would become your age, as well as my youth; but," pursued I, rising, "to put an end to all your hopes, be pleased to know, that I am determined never to give my hand till I can give my heart with it; for I have no notion of being perjured at the altar, and of vowing to love, honour, and obey, when it is impossible for me to do either."

"I went out of the room when I had said these words, leaving the baronet to mumble the ends of his fingers with his gums; for he affected to bite his nails, as some persons who really have teeth do, when they are angry."

"I met my aunt as I was going to my own chamber. "What, Henrietta!" said she, "have you left Sir Isaac alone? I suppose you have treated him rudely; but come, you must return with me."—"I will, if you insist upon it, Madam," said I, "but I had much rather be excused."—"Indeed!" said my aunt, looking a little angrily on me, "and with that grave face too!—but I shall not insist upon it, Miss, and so you may go up to your own room, if you please."

"Although I was very glad to be at liberty to retire, yet my aunt's permission was given in such a manner that I saw she was offended with me for desiring it. I had experienced the obstinacy of her temper on several occasions; and I was convinced that if she set her heart upon marrying me to the baronet, she would use her utmost endeavours to carry her point, and the loss of her favour might probably be the consequence of her disappointment."

CHAP. V.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF SOME DIFFICULTIES OUR HEROINE WAS INVOLVED IN, ARISING FROM AN OLD EXPLODED NOTION, THAT INTEREST OUGHT NOT TO BE

THE SOLD CONSIDERATION IN MARRIAGE.

FULL of these melancholy reflections, I resolved to write to Mr. Damer, acquaint him with what had passed, and intreat his advice in the uneasy and perplexed state of my mind. Not that I had the least intention of being governed by it, if he recommended to me compliance with my aunt's commands in favour of the baronet; but this I was well assured, from his good sense and natural rectitude of mind, he would not do, since it could never be supposed that such a man could be my choice; but I was willing to stand clear in his opinion, and pay him the deference that was due to the quality of guardian, which he had so kindly assumed.

"I had been writing near two hours, for I had given him a circumstantial detail of every thing that had passed with regard to the baronet, whose character I treated with great contempt; but, what was worse, my aunt herself did not escape some satirical strokes of my pen for her ready concurrence with the old man's proposals; and although I mentioned her (as it was my duty) with all imaginable love and respect, yet I could not help humorously rallying upon some of her notions, which were really odd enough, and I placed them in the most glaring light."

"The prodigious length of my letter first gave me notice that I had been a long time thus employed; and, looking at my watch, I found it was past our usual hour for tea, and wondered that I had not been summoned down stairs. I therefore made haste to conclude my letter, that I might send it to the post, when my aunt unfortunately entered the room. I started up from my chair when I saw her; and, hastily crushing the letter all in my hand, I put it into my pocket, not without betraying some signs of confusion."

"So, Henrietta," said my aunt, "have I caught you?"—"Caught me!" "Madam," said I, considering whether she might not have been looking over my shoulder while I was writing so faucily about her; for guilt, like love, makes every thing seem possible that we fear. "Yes," said she, "have you

"you not been writing? Nay, don't deny it," pursued she, for I hesitated, and knew not what to say, lest she should desire to see my letter; "it is no wonder that poor Sir Isaac Darby was rejected with so much scorn, when there is a favoured lover with whom you correspond privately."

"Bless me, Madam," cried I, "who has told you so? I correspond privately with a favoured lover! This is some cruel calumny invented by an enemy, to deprive me of your good opinion."—"Well," said my aunt, "shew me the letter you conveyed so hastily into your pocket upon my appearance, and then I shall know what to think."

"You never, Madam," replied I, "used to desire to see my letters; nor would you now, but in consequence of some suspicion very unfavourable to me."—"That suspicion," interrupted my aunt, "whatever it is, will be greatly strengthened by your refusing to shew me what you have been writing."

"Surely, Madam," replied I, "that is not just; I may have been writing to Mr. Damer, or to my brother."—"To your brother," said my aunt, "I am certain you was not writing, because you have not heard from him for several months, and don't know how to direct to him;" which indeed was but too true. "It is possible that you were writing to Mr. Damer; but why refuse to shew me your letter? you can have no transactions with him that I ought not to be acquainted with: but I am persuaded that letter was not designed for Mr. Damer; and there needs no more to convince me that you are carrying on a private, and therefore an improper correspondence, than your thus obstinately refusing to shew it me."

"My aunt had reason for what she said: nothing was more easy, if I was really innocent, than to shew her the letter, which would remove her suspicions; but this, as I had managed that fatal letter, it was impossible for me to do. By not shewing it, I confirmed those suspicions she had so unjustly conceived, which might indeed have disagreeable consequences; but, by shewing it, I was sure to incur her resentment for the liberties I had taken with her."

"How did I that moment inwardly regret my vanity, which had suffered me to rally the faults of a person on whom I so absolutely depended, merely to display my wit! I was so vexed at the dilemma to which I had reduced myself, that I burst into tears."

"Oh! I see how it is," said my aunt; "keep your letter, Henrietta, I am convinced sufficiently." She hurried out of my chamber at these words. Shocked to the soul at having thus incurred the imputation of entertaining a secret lover, I went after her, resolving in that first emotion to shew her the letter, and rather be thought ungrateful to her, than guilty of an imprudence so disadvantageous to my character; but she was already at the bottom of the stairs, and I had time to make new reflections which prevented my former purpose.

"I considered, that since there was no foundation for her fears of my listening to a private address, I might easily find means to undeceive her, and justify myself; but if I shewed her a letter, in which she was mentioned with so great freedom, I might possibly never be able to remove those impressions of me which she would doubtless receive, and I should be all my life branded for ingratitude."

"I was so terrified at this thought, that I resolved to put it out of my power to expose myself to such a misfortune, by destroying the fatal letter, which I did with a precipitation that left no time for second thoughts. When this was over, I expected to have found myself more calm and easy, but it was quite otherwise. I had given foundation to believe that I was engaged in a love-intrigue; for surely all clandestine addresses may be termed so, since there is too much mystery, contrivance, and little arts, necessary to them, not to give great pain to a delicate mind. I burst into tears at the reflection. My aunt's woman, who had a very tender regard for me, came into my chamber, and, finding me so disordered, begged to know what had happened."

"I related every thing that had passed between my aunt and I, but did not own to all the little freedoms I had taken with her in my letter; yet said enough to convince her, that I could not well show it to my aunt."

"Mrs. White, for that was her name, was very much concerned for my situation: she told me, that her lady and Mr. Danvers were in close conference. "It is certainly he," said she, "who has infused these suspicions into my lady, which, by this unfortunate circumstance of the letter, are now confirmed." She gave me such plain hints of the chaplain's selfish dispositions and designs, that it seemed highly probable he would spare no artifices to lessen my aunt's affection for me; for, since he had failed in making me a convert, which perhaps might have answered other views, he was desirous of keeping my aunt entirely to himself, and so manage her conscience, which he had the direction of, as that holy mother-church and he might divide her spoils.

"All this considered, my condition seemed so dangerous, that I begged Mrs. White to send a porter with a message from me to Mr. Damer, desiring to see him; for I resolved to regulate my conduct on this occasion wholly by his advice. She left me to do what I had desired her; and I remained alone in my chamber till nine o'clock, at which time I was summoned to supper.

"I found only my aunt and Mr. Danvers: I was a little confused; for knowing what suspicions I laboured under in my aunt's mind, I thought I had the air of a guilty person, and I felt that I blushed, and blushed the more for that reason.

"My aunt looked very coldly upon me; Mr. Danvers had the appearance of one that was very much concerned that all was not well between us. My aunt scarce spoke three words during supper; it was not my part surely to talk much; and Mr. Danvers accommodated himself to the present temper of my aunt; so that this was a very gloomy meal.

"When the cloth was removed, I was going to withdraw, for it seemed as if my presence was a restraint upon my aunt; but I considered that such a step, being unusual, would imply a consciousness of something wrong in me, and that being innocent, it was my part to seek an explanation. I therefore addressed myself to my aunt, and begged she would give me an op-

portunity of clearing myself, by telling me who had poisoned her mind with suspicions to my prejudice.

"The chaplain was about to leave the room upon my entering on this subject. "There is no necessity, Sir," said I, "for your retiring; I dare say the cause of my aunt's displeasure against me is no secret to you. My aunt has been told that I receive addresses from some man in private, and that I correspond with him: I declare this to be absolutely false; and I beg to know from whom you had your information, Madam," said I, again directing myself to her, "that I may refute this calumny: I am very confident the person who has thus maliciously injured me, will not dare to maintain the falsehood to my face."

"Whether the chaplain thought this was meant for him, I know not; but although he had continued standing, as if he intended to leave us to ourselves, yet I had no sooner uttered these last words than he resumed his seat immediately, as if he would shew me he was not in the least affected by them; but I observed that he fixed his eyes upon my aunt, and expected her answer with some emotion.

"Before I comply with your condition," said my aunt, "do you, Henrietta, agree to mine; let me see that letter you wrote to-day." I looked at the chaplain; I saw an alteration in his countenance, he was evidently more composed. "Oh!" thought I, sighing, "how great would my triumph be, if I had this letter to show, and could show it without fear!"

"You hesitate, Henrietta," pursued my aunt; "why, if that letter was not to a lover, why do you refuse to produce it?"—"I declare, Madam," said I, "upon my word and honour, that the letter was to Mr. Damer."—"Well, let me see it," said my aunt, "and I shall be satisfied."—"I cannot show it to you, Madam," replied I, in a faltering accent, for I dreaded the inference that would be drawn from what I was going to confess; "I have torn it."—"Well," said my aunt, with a calmness that cost her some pains to maintain, "and why did you tear it? it was not written to be torn, that is certain. But I will answer for you, niece, you tore it that I might not

"not see it; and why might not I see it if it was to Mr. Damer?"—"Again I protest," said I, "that it was to him; but I did not chuse to let you see it; it was a long letter, full of impertinencies: you would have thought I was very free in my observations on some particular persons, more free than became me perhaps. You might have been offended, and I tore it to prevent your seeing it."

My aunt looked down, paused, and seemed not wholly dissatisfied with my manner of accounting for the reluctance I shewed to deliver my letter to her; but before she would declare herself, it was necessary she should consult her oracle, and that could not be done before me. She therefore put an end to the conversation, by ringing the bell for her woman. I attended her to her chamber, at the door of which she bade me good night, telling me, she would talk further with me in the morning.

I endeavoured to make Mrs. White comprehend, by a look I gave her unobserved, that I wished to speak to her; and accordingly she came to me, after my aunt was in bed, and delivered the answer the porter had brought from Mr. Damer. He was out of town, but expected back in a week or two, was what the servants told him.

Mrs. White repeated her offers of service to me, but dropped some expressions which shewed she would be glad to be assured that I really had no secret engagement which might justify my aunt's concern.

These doubts, hinted with great respect, were so far from being resented by me, that I conceived the better opinion of her discretion, and confided absolutely in her sincerity. I made her quite easy with regard to the subject of her fears; and she repaid this condescension with the kindest assurances of attachment to me and care of my interests.

I went to bed, full of hope that I had in part removed my aunt's suspicions; and relying on my innocence, I was persuaded I should soon restore myself to her good opinion; but innocence is not always a security to its possessor, because malice attains its ends by arts, which a good mind cannot conceive, and therefore is unable to guard against.

Mrs. White informed me in a whisper,

as I was going into my aunt's dressing-room next morning, where we always breakfasted, that her lady and the chaplain had been talking together for half an hour. I drew no favourable omen from this intelligence, nor from my aunt's looks, which were very cold and constrained.

When breakfast was over, and Mr. Danvers had withdrawn, I expected she would enter into some conversation with me on the subject of the letter; but finding she talked of indifferent things, I took occasion to mention it myself, and begged to know if she had any doubts still remaining in her mind.

"Surely," replied my aunt, "you think I am a person that can be very easily imposed upon."—"Then you are resolved, Madam," said I, with some peevishness, (for indeed I was horribly vexed to find her so strongly prejudiced) "to believe I encourage a clandestine address, notwithstanding every appearance to the contrary."

"No indeed," interrupted my aunt, "I am not so unreasonable, Miss; it is because there are very strong appearances against you, that I am forced to believe what you would not have me—That letter, Henrietta—But no more on this subject at present: I am going to my house near Windsor Forest to-morrow; we shall there have leisure enough to talk over this affair, and there I shall open my mind freely to you." I curtsied, and was silent.

My aunt took me with her to pay some morning visits, and seemed to be in very good humour; but her words, that she would open her mind freely to me at Windsor, gave me a great deal of anxiety. I did not doubt but I was to be pressed again on the subject of Sir Isaac Darby, and I was prepared for an obstinate resistance; but I was apprehensive that this resistance to my aunt's will, meeting with the unaccountable suspicions she had entertained, would infallibly ruin me with her.

"O my brother!" thought I, "why are you not here to countenance and protect me? or why have you so long neglected me, as to leave me in suspense whether I have a brother or not!"

This thought, and several others no less painful, spread an air of pensiveness and melancholy on my countenance, which my aunt, as I perceived, by some hints that dropped from her,

inter-

interpreted to my disadvantage. In short, my dear, she imputed my pensiveness to the concern I was under at leaving town, as I could not expect to have many opportunities of seeing at Windsor this lover who had possession of my heart.

You cannot imagine, Miss Woodby, how much I suffered in being obliged to restrain my indignation at being thus treated; to have a phantom of a lover conjured up to tease me with, and to combat suspicions which had not the least foundation but in prejudice and caprice, against which plain truth and reason were very unequal arms: for how should reason remove what would never have been admitted, if reason had not been first set aside? Nothing was ever more improbable than that I should have a secret lover: I never went any where without my aunt; her visitors were mine; I could see nobody without her knowledge: how was this engagement formed? But her chaplain had doubtless assured her, that I had a secret engagement, and she piously believed him, in contradiction to her own judgment: this was one of those cases that required an implicit faith; and in matters of faith, you know, Roman Catholicks are not permitted to exercise their reason.

Weset out next morning for Windsor: the chaplain and my aunt's woman being in the coach, the conversation was wholly upon indifferent things. After dinner was over, my aunt took me into her closet, and entered into a long discourse, which it would tire you to repeat—but the substance of it was my unhappy situation when she took me out of the hands of Lady Manning; her tenderness for me; the great things she designed to do for me, nothing less than making me her sole heir; the folly of marrying for love, exemplified in my father's marriage; her fears that I was going to throw myself away on some young fop, who would make me miserable; Sir Isaac Darby's generous passion for me, his great estate, the handsome settlements he proposed to make; and, lastly, the pleasure I would give her, by suiting in this case my inclinations to my interest.

To all this I answered very particularly: I acknowledged she had shewn a parental tenderness for me, and I had

paid her, and ever would pay her, I said, the duty and obedience due from a child to a parent; that in the article of marriage, my natural parents would certainly have allowed me a negative voice, which was all I claimed now, since I was absolutely resolved not only never to marry without her consent, but not to admit of any address which she disapproved. I begged her never to propose Sir Isaac Darby to me again, because my heart wholly rejected him; though at the same time I protested (as I might well do) that my affections were entirely disengaged.

"All your asseverations," replied my aunt, who had listened to me with many signs of impatience, "signify nothing without you marry Sir Isaac Darby; and by that only shall I be convinced that your head does not run upon some wild showy fellow, who will make your heart ache.

"Here," continued she, "is a baronet of an ancient family, a large estate, of good morals, not disagreeable in his person—but what is person in a man, who loves you, who will make you a large jointure, who gives you a title, place, equipage, all that a prudent sensible woman can desire, and you refuse him? Grant that he is older than you, he has the more wisdom." (O my dear, how difficult it was for me to forbear laughing here.) "But you are not in love with him—let me tell you, Henrietta, that is not a plea for a young woman of delicacy. What, is it not possible for you to make a good wife to an honest gentleman, without bringing with you all that romantick passion which forces girls to jump out of windows to get to their fellows! and, for the sake of a man who possibly a few weeks before was an absolute stranger to them, break through every tie of natural affection, and, to be a wife, be contented to be neither daughter, sister, nor piece?"

"I was going to speak. My aunt in a peremptory manner laid her hand on my mouth. "I will not hear a word more," said she, "on this subject; if you refuse to give your hand to Sir Isaac, I know what I am to think. I allow you two days to consider of it. Hitherto I have treated you as my own child; if you comply, you shall find me a mother; if not, I am only your

"your aunt; and you know how some
"who stand in that degree of relation
"to you behave." This was pretty
"plain, my dear; I was so shocked that
"I suffered my aunt to go out of the
"closet without making any answer;
"and retired to my own chamber to weep
"in freedom.

C H A P. VI.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE IS VERY
REASONABLY ALARMED.

IT was indeed true that my father's
family took no notice of me, not-
withstanding the applications that had
been made to them; and when my
aunt Meadows introduced me at my
uncle's the Earl of —, I was re-
ceived so coldly by him and his lady,
that I inly resolved never to expose
myself to such a mortification again;
and my aunt entered so far into my
just resentment, as never to press me
to make them a second visit.

My brother was abroad; if living,
he neglected me; and perhaps I had
no brother; for how else could I ac-
count for so long a silence in one who
seemed to have such tender affections?
I had no resource but in Mr. Damer's
friendship, and he was at this time un-
luckily at too great a distance to be
of any use to me. I saw plainly that
I must either accept Sir Isaac Darby,
or be thrown back into my former in-
digence and dependence. Dreadful
alternative! But, the man considered,
was there room to pause long?

My imagination suggested to me
every possible ill consequence of the loss
of my aunt's favour; but, weighed
against the misery of such a marriage,
they all seemed light. Yet, would you
think it, my dear, amidst the many
real evils I had reason to apprehend
by disobliging my aunt, one trifling
circumstance dwelt strongest upon my
mind, and that was the occasion of
triumph I should give to Lady Man-
ning, who would exult over my fallen
expectations and return to indigence?
I was ashamed of my own weakness
when I found this thought capable of
giving me so much pain; and in the
contemplation of greater misfortunes
which were likely to be my lot, I

sought to blunt my sense of these lesser
ones, which were the necessary conse-
quences of them.

Towards evening Mrs. White threw
herself in my way, as I was walking
pensive in the garden. She told me,
that my aunt was full of hopes that I
would comply; that Sir Isaac was to
be invited the next day; and that it
was expected the generosity of his pro-
posals with regard to settlements, the
rich presents of jewels which he would
offer, and his resolution to agree to
every thing I desired, would make
such an impression on my mind, as to
induce me to give a free and willing
consent. Mrs. White added, that
since my aunt was so determined upon
concluding this match, she wished I
could conquer my aversion to it; for
she feared that my absolute refusal
would so irritate her, that she might
be easily persuaded to take some vio-
lent resolution against me; "And there
is one," said she, "who will spare no
pains to bring that to pass."

I replied, that nothing which could
befal me from the loss of my aunt's
favour, was to be dreaded so much as
being the wife of Sir Isaac Darby, and
that my resolution was fixed. Mrs.
White sighed, shrugged her shoulders,
and hastened from me for fear of be-
ing observed, seeming, as I thought,
to believe my case desperate.

When she was gone, I considered,
that if I accepted of the two days my
aunt had given me to come to a reso-
lution, I should be exposed during
that time to the odious courtship of Sir
Isaac, whose presence was, it seems,
judged necessary to influence me: I
therefore determined to declare myself
immediately, and plunge at once into
the distresses that awaited me.

I left the garden instantly, and went
in search of my aunt. As soon as I en-
tered the room where she was, she laid
down a book she had been reading,
and looked earnestly at me, seeming,
by my countenance, on which I be-
lieve was impressed the agitation of
my mind, to expect something extra-
ordinary.

"You have indulged me, Madam,"
said I, "with two days to consider
of your proposal with regard to Sir
Isaac Darby; but so long a time is
not necessary: were any thing less at
stake

"stake than the future happiness of my life, you should find me incapable of opposing your will; but in this case it is not possible for me to obey you. Judge of my aversion to that man, when I protest to you, that if death or his hand was an alternative that I must chuse, I would without hesitation prefer death as the lesser hardship."

"This determined speech seemed to surprise my aunt, though I think she had no reason to expect I could ever be prevailed upon to marry Sir Isaac."

"You are an undone girl," said she, after a pause of near three minutes; "I believe your father's folly is hereditary to you. I have done my duty. Your obstinacy be upon your own head."

"I confess I was greatly affected with her calm resentment, so likely to be lasting: I burst into tears; she went out of the room, I followed her into another, where Mr. Danvers was sitting. As soon as I perceived him, I hastily withdrew, for I was not willing to be seen by him in that state of dejection. I retired to my own room, and there, after I had relieved my mind by another flood of tears, I endeavoured to soften my own apprehensions of what might be the effects of having disoblged the only relation who would own me, and collected all my fortitude to enable me to bear the worst that could happen. But that worst, my dear, proved so terrible to my frightened imagination, that, to avoid it, I have taken a very imprudent and dangerous step; and whither it will lead me, Heaven knows, for my heart forebodes some fatal consequence from it."

"Lord bless me!" said Miss Woodby, after escaping such an odious husband as Sir Isaac, was any thing worse to be feared!"

"Ah!" cried Miss Courteney, "but it was not certain whether I should escape him; for if my aunt's scheme had taken place, I had every thing to fear."—"What could your aunt's scheme be?" said Miss Woodby, impatiently. "Mr. Danvers's rather," said Miss Courteney, "and it's being his, made it more formidable."

"My aunt seemed so easy and cheerful at supper, and spoke to me so kindly, that all my gloomy apprehensions vanished, and I was happy in

the thought that I should preserve her favour without becoming the wife of Sir Isaac Darby; but I was soon undeceived. Mrs. White tapped at my door, after she had put my aunt to bed; I let her in, and told her, in a rapture of joy, how favourably my aunt seemed disposed, and that I should no longer be persecuted about the odious baronet. "O Miss!" said she, "I am afraid this calm foretels a storm."—"A storm!" repeated I, "what do you mean?"

"I always dreaded," said she, "that Mr. Danvers would use his power with my lady to your disadvantage; but who could have imagined that he would prevail upon her to send you to France, and lock you up in a nunnery?"

"How!" exclaimed I, almost breathless with terror and surprise: "Confinement in a nunnery! Is it possible? How came you to know this?"

"By the strangest chance in the world," replied Mrs. White. "I am not used to listen, I scorn it; but some words that fell from the chaplain, alarmed me on your account, and I resolved, if possible, to know what he was driving at. This evening," pursued she, "I went to my lady, to take her directions about some laces I was making up for her. I found the chaplain with her: they seemed to be in deep discourse; and my lady, as if angry at being interrupted, bid me, in a hasty manner, come to her another time. I went away immediately; and, just as I shut the door, I heard the chaplain say, 'Depend upon it, Madam, there is no other way to preserve her from ruin.'"

"Certainly," thought I to myself, "this must concern Miss Courteney; I put my ear to the key-hole, and heard my lady answer, 'But shall I not be called a tyrant, for sending my niece to a convent, contrary to her inclinations?'"

"The chaplain made a long speech, which I could not distinctly hear; but he told her she must make a sacrifice of such idle censures to God, that it was her duty to endeavour to save a soul; that you were in a state of perdition; and oh, my dear Miss! but that I cannot believe, he assured her you would throw yourself away upon the idle fellow (those were his words)

"words) that you were in love with, if not prevented by bolts and bars.

"In the end my lady seemed determined, and they consulted together about the means they should use to entrap you into a convent. My lady proposed making a tour to Paris, by way of amusement, to take you with her, and leave you in some monastery. Mr. Danvers, I found, objected to that; he desired she would leave the affair wholly to his management, and said he would think of some expedient that would be less troublesome to her. I did not stay to hear any more; for I was apprehensive of some of the servants coming that way, and discovering me at so mean a trick as listening."

"Good God!" cried I, "what shall I do? What shall I do?" repeated I passionately, in the anguish of my mind. "My guardian is not in town! to whom shall I apply for advice and assistance in this extremity! I may be hurried away to this horrid confinement when I least expect it."

"That is impossible," said Mrs. White; "forewarned forearmed, as the saying is. Since you know what is intended against you, you must be upon your guard; you cannot be carried away against your will."

"Mrs. White did not appear to me to have a very just sense of the danger I was exposed to; for what will not bigotry attempt! I was glad, therefore, when she left me to my own reflections; which she did, after begging me to be composed, and not to discover the manner in which I came by the intelligence she had given me.

"The latter part of her injunction I faithfully promised to perform; but oh! my dear Miss Woodby, how was it possible for me to be composed amidst such dreadful apprehensions? To be locked up in a gloomy monastery, perhaps for ever, exposed to the persecutions of superstitious zeal! but this was not the worst of my fears. To be consigned over, perhaps, to the care of a wolf in sheep's clothing, who had already shocked my delicacy with freedoms, that, proceeding from such a man, in such a character, might well awaken the most frightful suspicions. 'Truly,' said Miss Woodby, 'that seemed to be the worst part of your danger; for I don't like this Jesuit at

all; every thing may be dreaded from a hypocrite: but, as to the being shut up in a convent, there is no great matter in it. Such beauty as yours would have soon engaged some adventurous knight in your cause, who would have scaled the walls to have delivered you. Oh, what a charming adventure! I protest I would submit to a few months confinement in such a place, for the pleasure of being delivered from it in so gallant a manner.'

"Sure you are not in earnest," said Henrietta. "Indeed but I am," replied Miss Woodby. "Well," resumed Miss Courteney, "you have very whimsical notions; but I assure you none of these entered into my head: the loss of liberty seemed to me so frightful a misfortune, that I was almost distracted with the idea of it."

"The first thought that occurred to me, and which indeed was the most natural, was to prevent my aunt from carrying her designs into execution, by leaving her. I might well imagine she would use violence to detain me, if I attempted it openly; therefore it was necessary to steal myself away, and this has the air of an adventure you must own; but as I had no confidant in this design, no gallant youth to assist me in my escape, and did not even make use of a ladder of ropes, or endanger breaking my neck, I am afraid this adventure is not in a taste high enough for you."

"Oh, you are rallying me!" said Miss Woodby; "but I long to know how you escaped. No confidant! how could you manage so arduous an undertaking by yourself?"

"With great ease, I assure you," said Miss Courteney; "and I don't think you will allow it to be an escape, when I tell you I walked peaceably out of a door, not without some trepidation however, which arose less from the fear of a pursuit, than the consciousness that I was taking a step which every young woman of delicacy will if possible avoid."

"As I have already told you, I instantly resolved upon leaving my aunt; but where should I seek an asylum? Mr. Damer, whose protection I might have requested with honour, was not in town; my brother was abroad; none of my father's relations would

receive me; I had no acquaintances but such as were my aunt's, to whom any application would have been very improper, as I should have found very strong prejudices to combat with, it being a received maxim among persons of a certain age, that young people are always in the wrong; besides, one seldom meets with any one who has not that littleness of soul which is mistaken for prudence, and teaches that it is not safe to meddle with other people's affairs; which narrow notion prevents many a good office, many a kind interposition: so that we seem to live only for ourselves.

My perplexed mind could suggest no better expedient to me, than to seize the first opportunity that offered to go to London, and there conceal myself in a private lodging till Mr. Damer's return, who I doubted not would take me under his protection. Before I had fixed upon this resolution, great part of the night was wasted; so that I lay later than usual the next morning. When I went down to breakfast, I found my aunt dressed, and her coach ordered. She took notice that my eyes looked heavy; I told her I had a violent head-ach, which indeed was true: she said it was a cold, and bid me keep myself warm.

"I am going to Richmond," added she; "it will be late before I return to dinner; therefore let the cook get you a chicken when you chuse to dine, and don't walk out to increase your cold."

My heart leaped so when I found I was to be left at home, that I was afraid my emotion was visible in my countenance. My aunt, however, did not observe it; for, apparently, she had no suspicion that I knew any thing of her design to send me to a convent, and therefore she could not possibly guess my intention to leave her. But she certainly over-acted her part, all on a sudden to drop her favourite scheme, the marrying me to Sir Isaac Darby; and, when I might reasonably expect that my obstinate refusal to comply with her desires would create some coldness in her towards me, to find her not only free from all resentment, but even particularly kind and obliging: sure this was sufficient to raise doubts in my mind, that something

more than ordinary was at the bottom of all this affability.

It often happens that cunning over-reaches itself; for it seldom hits a medium, and generally does too much or too little. My aunt's behaviour would have led me to suspect that some design was forming against me; but if it had not been for Mrs. White's information, I should never have been able to discover what that design was, for my own penetration would have gone no farther than to suggest, that some scheme was laid to bring about my marriage with Sir Isaac Darby; but this fear would have been sufficient to have winged my flight; so that the arts my aunt made use of to lull me into security, proved the very foundation of my doubts.

I had a new palpitation of the heart when I saw the chaplain follow my aunt into the coach. "Sure!" thought I, "Heaven approves of my design to get away, since so many circumstances concur to make it practicable." It was natural, my dear, as my religion was in danger from the persecutions preparing for me, to think Heaven interested in the success of my intended escape.

There is certainly something very pleasing in supposing one's self, on certain occasions, the peculiar care of Providence. A Roman Catholic would have made little less than a miracle of so favourable a concurrence of circumstances. However, I suppressed this rising folly of spiritual vanity, and employed my thoughts in contriving how to get to town with convenience and safety, without expecting any supernatural assistance.

Here Miss Woodby broke in upon the fair narrator, with an exclamation that will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA CONCLUDES HER HISTORY.

"OH! my dear," interrupted Miss Woodby, laughing, "you have given an excellent name to a species of folly, which at once excites one's laughter and indignation. I know an old lady who is a constant frequenter of the chapel in Oxford Road, that has

‘has arrived to such a height of spiritual vanity, as you justly term it, that she fancies Providence is perpetually exerting itself in miracles for her preservation, and that her most inconsiderable actions are under the immediate direction of Heaven; for she will tell you with surprising meekness and humility, that, unworthy as she is, she is in high favour with God; if she happens to stumble against a stone without falling, she says, with a smile of conscious satisfaction, “To be sure God is very good to me.” According to her, *God acts by partial, not by general laws*. And should it cease raining immediately before she is to go out, either to church or a visit, it is all one, she supposes that Providence is at that moment at work for her, and has cleared the skies that she may walk with conveniency; for she cannot always purchase a coach or a chair, half of her little income being appropriated to the preachers, from whose doctrine she has imbibed these self-flattering ideas.’

‘Oh!’ said Miss Courteney, laughing, ‘you have heightened the colouring of this picture exceedingly.’

‘Upon my word I have not,’ said Miss Woodby; ‘and—but that I am not willing to interrupt your story so long, I could give you an hundred proofs of this odd species of pride; for I assure you, my dear, the haughtiest beauty in the drawing-room, amidst a crowd of adorers, and in the fullest display of airs and graces, has not half the vanity of one of these saints of Whitefield’s or Wesley’s creation.’

‘I really pity the poor woman you mentioned,’ said Henrietta; ‘she appears to me to be very far from attaining to any degree of perfection: for may it not be supposed that this unreasonable confidence will lead her to neglect many duties very essential to a good Christian? For I have heard it observed, that the preachers of that sect chiefly declaim against fashionable follies; and, according to them, to dress with elegance, to go to a play or an opera, or to make one at a party of cards, are mortal sins; mean time poor mortals are wholly neglected, and superstition is made an equivalent for a virtuous life.’

‘Yet a writer,’ replied Miss Woodby, ‘who is greatly admired by our sex,

‘and who in his works pays court to all religions, carrying himself so evenly amidst them, that it is hard to distinguish to which he most inclines, has introduced these modern saints reclaiming a woman who had led a very vicious life, and doing more than all the best orthodox divines had done; and he has not thrown away his compliment. I dare say this numerous sect has bought up an impression of his book; and is not the Third Edition upon the title-page a very good return to it? Oh! my dear, there is no vanity like the vanity of some authors: it is not to be doubted but if there were mussulmen enough in the kingdom to add a unit more to the account of those editions, but we should find him introducing the Alcoran making profelytes from luxury.—But how have we wandered from your story! You are still at Windsor; I long to hear the rest.’

‘I assure you, my dear,’ said Miss Courteney, sighing, ‘I have not been sorry for this little interruption: it has given some relief to my mind; for I know not how it is, but the recollection of this period is painful to me; and yet, under the same perplexity, and with the same apprehensions, I should certainly act again as I have done. I think I told you that Mr. Danvers went in the coach with my aunt; a circumstance with which I had reason to be rejoiced, as it greatly facilitated my escape. I was still lingering over the tea-table, uncertain in what manner I should perform my little journey, when Mrs. White came into the room: she was apprehensive that I should be uneasy at my aunt’s and the chaplain’s excursion together, as supposing it was to settle something relating to their scheme; and therefore made haste to inform me, that my aunt had been summoned to Richmond by a message from a Roman Catholick friend of her’s, who was dangerously ill there; and desired to see her, together with Mr. Danvers, who was her ghostly father, as they term it.

‘Mrs. White continued to talk to me on the subject of my aunt’s design, while I was considering whether it would be proper to make her the confidant of my intended flight to London, and engage her to procure me some vehicle to carry me thither. But it was

Q 2 ‘possible

possible she might not approve of my leaving my aunt so suddenly, in which case I should find it difficult to get away: besides, I did not think it reasonable to involve her in the consequences of my flight, by making her privy to it; and that the only way to enable her to justify herself to my aunt was not to make her guilty. I therefore resolved to steal out of the house, and go as far as I could on foot, not doubting but chance would throw some carriage in my way, in which I might finish my journey; and, to gain all the time I could, I told Mrs. White, that my anxiety had hindered me from sleeping all night; that I was not well, and would go to my chamber and try to get some repose, desiring her not to disturb me.

Having thus got four hours at least before me, I resolved to write a short letter to my aunt before I went. In this letter I told her, that having accidentally discovered her intention of sending me to a convent abroad, my terrors of such a confinement had forced me to throw myself under the protection of Mr. Damer; that I hoped, through his mediation, to convince her I had been guilty of no imprudences which could merit such severe usage as a punishment, and was not so unsettled in my religion as to be perverted by that or any other means. I begged her to believe that, except in that article, and in marrying contrary to my inclinations, I would pay her the same obedience as to a parent; but that I would rather submit to the lowest state of poverty, than marry a man whom I could neither love nor esteem; or change the religion in which I was bred, and with which I was entirely satisfied. I concluded with earnestly intreating to be restored to her good opinion, which I assured her I would always endeavour to deserve.

Having sealed and directed this letter, I put it into one of my dressing-boxes, not doubting but, as soon as I was missing, every thing that belonged to me would be searched for letters, in hopes of farther discoveries. I next tied up some linen in a handkerchief, and with an aching heart sallied out of my chamber, and crossed a passage-room which had steps leading to the garden. As soon as I had got

out of the back-door, which opened into the forest, I concluded myself safe from discovery; and mended my pace, having no difficulty in finding my way, because I pursued the road which I had often traversed in a coach or a chaise.

You will easily imagine my mind was full of melancholy reflections; and indeed so entirely was I engrossed by them for near an hour, that I did not perceive I was tired, till I grew so faint I was hardly able to move a step farther. I had now got into the open road, and it being about the time when I might expect to see some of the stage-coaches from Windsor pass that way, I sat down under the shade of a large tree, at some distance from the road, impatiently wishing for the sight. All this time I had not been alarmed with the fear of meeting with any insult, for I had seen no one from whom I could apprehend any such thing; but I had scarce enjoyed this comfortable shelter three minutes, when I perceived two ill-looking fellows, as I thought them, making towards me with all the speed they were able. I started up in inconceivable terror, looking round me to see if any help was near if they should assault me, when I fortunately discovered the stage-coach; and being now eased of my fears, I resumed my station, till it was come near enough for me to speak to the driver. The two fellows who had given me such a terrible alarm, stopped short upon seeing the coach, and I really believe I had an escape from them.

I called out to the coachman as soon as he could hear me. You know, my dear, the difficulties I found in getting admission. Little did those good women, who refused it, imagine that, to avoid a slight inconvenience to themselves, they were consigning me over to the greatest distress imaginable.

Wretches! exclaimed Miss Woodby, I cannot think of them without detestation; but, my dear, pursued she, did not you wonder to see a person of any figure in a stage-coach? As for you, I soon discovered there was something extraordinary in your case: but what did you think of me with such company, and in such an equipage?

Indeed, my dear, said Miss Courtney,



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ney, 'at that time a stage-coach appeared to me a most desirable vehicle, and I had not then the least notion of it's being a mean one; so greatly do our opinions of things alter with our circumstances and situations: besides, a difficulty then occurred to my thoughts, which, amidst the hurry and precipitation with which I quitted my aunt's house, had not been sufficiently attended to before, and that was how I should dispose of myself for a few days, till Mr. Damer's return; for it was necessary I should conceal myself with great care, having so much to apprehend from my aunt's bigotry and prejudices, and the (perhaps) interested officiousness of her chaplain.

'Under what strange disadvantages had I lodgings to seek for! by an assumed name, with an immediate occasion for them; and no recommendation to any particular house, which I could be sure was a reputable one. Your politeness, and the unexpected offer of your friendship, encouraged me to communicate my distress to you, and to intreat your assistance; and I must still regret the unlucky mistake that brought me hither instead of Mrs. Egret's. And now, my dear, you have my whole story before you. Have I not been very unfortunate? and am I not in a most dreadful situation? But what it chiefly concerns me to know, does your judgment quit me of imprudence and folly in this precipitate flight from my aunt, to whom I owed so many benefits, and on whom I depended for support?

'Approve your flight!' cried Miss Woodby; 'Yes, certainly, child: who would not fly from a bigot, a priest, and an old hideous lover? I protest I would in your case have done the same thing.—Well, that is some comfort,' replied Miss Courteney; 'but every body will not think as you do; and to a mind of any delicacy, sure nothing is so shocking as to have a reputation to defend; and the step I have taken will no doubt expose me to many unfavourable censures.'

'And do you imagine,' said Miss Woodby, 'that with a form so pleasing, and an understanding so distinguished, you will be exempted from the tax that envy is sure to levy upon merit?

'Don't you know what the most sensible of all poets says—

'Envy will merit as it's shade pursue,
'And like a shadow proves the substance true.

'Take my word for it, it is no great compliment we pay to persons, when we tell them that all the world speaks well of them; for those who are remarkable for any shining qualities will be more envied than admired, and frequently more calumniated than praised. But, child,' pursued the volatile Miss Woodby, assuming a sprightly air, 'how do you intend to dispose of yourself to-day? It is late; I must go home to dress.'

'Dispose of myself!' repeated Miss Courteney, 'even in this solitary chamber; for I am determined, since I must stay here a day or two longer, to be as little with my landlady as possible.'

Miss Woodby then fluttered down stairs, followed by her fair friend, who took that opportunity to tell Mrs. Eccles, that she should not leave her so suddenly as she had imagined; which was very agreeable news to the milliner, who had no other objection to her beautiful lodger, but her extreme reserve, which did not at all suit her purposes.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTAINING NOTHING EITHER
NEW OR EXTRAORDINARY.

MISS Courteney, after having traversed her chamber several times in great restlessness of mind, at length resolved to take a hackney-coach and drive to Mr. Damer's, supposing she should know from his clerks or servants the exact time when he was expected home; at least they could give her a direction where to write to him, and it would be some comfort to acquaint him with her situation, and have his advice.

She had no sooner formed this design, than she hastened to put it in execution; and having made a slight alteration in her dress, she went down to Mrs. Eccles, and desired her to send her maid for a coach, telling her she was obliged to go into the city upon business, and desired her not to wait for her at dinner. Mrs. Eccles insisted upon waiting till four o'clock

o'clock at least, and attended her to the door, less out of complaisance than to hear where she ordered the coachman to drive; for the inquietude, irresolution, and pensiveness, which she discovered in her fair lodger, extremely heightened her curiosity to know her affairs.

Henrietta, though she did not suspect the motive of her officiousness, yet not thinking it proper to let her know where she was going, only bid the coachman drive to St. Paul's Church-yard; and, when there, she gave him a fuller direction. 'Alas!' sighed she, when the coach stopped before the great gates of her guardian's house, 'were the hospitable master of this mansion at home, here should I find a secure asylum.'

As soon as a servant appeared, she asked if Mr. Damer was at home, that she might with greater propriety introduce her farther enquiries; but was most agreeably surprised to hear him answer her in the affirmative, while he opened the coach-door: however, she ordered the coachman to wait, and then followed the servant, who introduced her into a large parlour, and retired to acquaint his master with her being there.

Immediately a young gentleman, of an engaging appearance, entered the room, and desired to know her commands. Henrietta seeing, instead of her guardian, a young man whom she was quite a stranger to, blushed at first, but a more painful sense of her disappointment soon spread a paleness over her fair face.

'Is not Mr. Damer at home, Sir?' said she, in an accent that shewed her concern; 'my business was with him.'

'My father, Madam,' said the young gentleman, 'is in Holland, from whence I came myself but lately; he has affairs to settle there which will detain him three or four weeks. But cannot I serve you, Madam?' added he, his voice, unperceived by himself, becoming softer while he gazed on a form which it was not possible to behold without some sensibility. 'Pray let me know, it will give me great pleasure if I can be in the least degree useful to you.'

'I shall be obliged to you, Sir,' replied Miss Courteney, 'if you will forward a letter from me to Mr. Damer. It is a great unhappiness to me that he is abroad at this time: he is my guardian, and at present I have need of his advice and assistance.'

'Pardon me, Madam,' said young Mr. Damer, 'is not your name Courteney?'—'It is, Sir,' replied she.

'Dear Miss,' said he, looking on her with a tender sympathy, 'I wish my father was at home, since you wish so. And yet, perhaps—all parents are alike,' added he, after a pause and sighing; 'they are too apt to imagine that happiness consists in riches. But are you in a place of safety, Miss? Are you sure you are in no danger of being discovered? I wish it was in my power to offer you an asylum; but—'

'Bless me, Sir!' interrupted Henrietta, in great astonishment, 'you seem to be perfectly well acquainted with my situation.'

'Yes, Madam,' said Mr. Damer, 'I know something of your affairs, and from my soul I approve of your courage and resolution. A gentleman, named Danvers, was here yesterday to enquire for you; your aunt's chaplain, is he not?'

'Yes, Sir,' replied Miss Courteney, 'and my persecutor—but what did he say? I suppose he represented me in strange colours.'

'You need only to be seen, Madam,' said Mr. Damer, 'to undeceive the most prejudiced: yet what he said was not disadvantageous to you, unless,' added he, with a soft smile, 'you think it a fault to have a tender heart.'

'Ah! the wretch,' interrupted Miss Courteney, not able to contain her indignation; 'I see he has been propagating falsehoods injurious to my reputation; after having poisoned the mind of my aunt with suspicions that were the cause of my losing her affection, he is endeavouring to deprive me of every friend I have in the world. But this, Sir, is the plain truth: he suggested, as I have no reason to doubt, a preposterous match for me to my aunt; I rejected it; he found means to persuade my aunt, that I listened privately to the addresses of some man who was an improper husband for me. My aunt, in order to prevent my ruin, as she supposed, insisted upon my accepting the person she had chosen for me; and, upon my obstinate refusal, was prevailed upon by her chaplain to resolve to confine me in a nunnery abroad. I had intelligence of this design, and I secretly left my aunt's house, to prevent her executing it; but I am

'I am so far from having any secret engagement, that if I could be sure my aunt would not pursue her scheme of entrapping me in a convent, I would instantly return and bind myself by the most solemn oaths never to marry any one whom she does not approve.'

'You see, Sir,' proceeded Miss Courteney, 'what need I have of your father's assistance; he is my only friend and protector; through his mediation I might expect to be restored to the good opinion of my aunt.'

'Well, Madam,' said Mr. Damer, 'if you will write to him, I will take care of your letter; and, if it be ready to-morrow, I will attend you myself for it; I hope you have no objection to my knowing where you are: in my father's absence I shall be proud to act as your guardian; though he has had the happiness of knowing you longer, yet his concern for your interest cannot be greater than mine. Shall I wait on you to-morrow morning, Miss?' added he. Henrietta, by his manner of urging this request, and his frequently casting his eye towards the door, as if afraid of some interruption, concluding that she detained him from business of more importance, rose up immediately; and, giving him a direction to her lodgings by the name of Benson, told him, she would have her letter ready; but asked if it would not come safe inclosed to him by the penny post, being unwilling, she said, to give him the trouble of coming for it.

'I beg, Madam,' said he, as he took her hand to lead her to the coach, 'that you will believe I can have no greater pleasure than that of serving you. It is necessary that I should have an opportunity of talking to you at leisure, that I may know how I can be farther useful to you.'

Having helped her into the coach, he bowed low, and retired hastily, with such an expression of tender concern on his countenance as any woman, less free from vanity than Miss Courteney, would not have failed to observe; but she making no other reflections on his behaviour, than that he was more polite than persons usually are who are bred up to business, congratulated herself on having found a friend, through whom she could securely correspond with her guardian, and receive his advice, so that

she might now consider herself as being under his immediate care and direction, though absent; a circumstance that greatly alleviated her uneasiness.

Mrs. Eccles, who had waited dinner for her longer than had been agreed on, expressed great pleasure at seeing her look so cheerful. 'To be sure,' said she, 'you have heard some unexpected good news; I am heartily glad of it.' 'Well, now I hope you will have more spirits,' Henrietta smiled, but made no answer; for an ingenious mind can only evade indiscreet curiosity by silence.

The cloth was scarce removed, when the young lord, who had now taken possession of his apartment in Mrs. Eccles's house, came into the parlour. Henrietta immediately rose up to retire to her own chamber, when he starting back, and standing at the door as if to obstruct her passage—'I came,' said he, 'Mrs. Eccles, to beg you would make me a dish of coffee; but since my presence drives this young lady away, I will go up stairs again.'

'Oh, by no means, my lord,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'I am sure Miss Benson will not let you think so.—You are not going, Miss, are you?' added she, turning to Henrietta.

'I have letters to write,' said the young lady, 'that will take me up the whole afternoon.'

'Well,' said my lord, 'I will drink no coffee then; for unless you stay, Miss, I shall be persuaded that my coming has driven you away. Let me intreat you,' pursued he, entering and leading her to a chair, 'to allow me the pleasure of drinking a dish of coffee with you; you will have time enough afterwards to write your letters.'

Miss Courteney, who was willing to avoid the appearance of singularity, sat down again, though with some reluctance, telling his lordship, that she would not be the means of disappointing him of his coffee; but that she must insist upon being permitted to withdraw in half an hour, having business of consequence upon her hands.

The young nobleman gave little attention to what she said, but gazed on her with an earnestness that threw her into some confusion. The milliner going out of the room to give orders about the coffee, he began in most vehement language

language to declare a passion for her, and called in the assistance of poetry, to express his admiration of her charms.

Henrietta, who in her own character would have treated this manner of address with ridicule and contempt, thought it became her, in her present circumstances, to resent it seriously; therefore rising, with some signs of indignation, she told him, that since his lordship thought proper to entertain her with such kind of discourse, she would immediately retire. My lord, who saw she was angry in good earnest, was excessively afraid of her leaving him; therefore taking her hand, which he forcibly held, till he had sealed a vow upon it with his lips that he would not say another word to offend her, he brought her back to her seat, which, upon seeing Mrs. Eccles enter, she resumed.

The conversation then took another turn; but Henrietta was too much chagrined to mix in it with any degree of cheerfulness: besides, the party seemed to her to be but ill assorted, a nobleman, a milliner, and a young woman in obscure circumstances. Her delicacy was shocked, and all the politeness she was mistress of was scarce sufficient to hinder her from shewing how much she was displeased with herself and her company.

As soon as the tea-equipage was removed, she looked at her watch; and seeming apprehensive that she should not have time enough to write her letters, she withdrew with such precipitation, that they had no opportunity to solicit her longer stay.

'This is a strange girl,' said the young lord, throwing himself into his chair, from whence he had risen to return the hasty compliment she made at her departure, 'but divinely handsome! Who can she be? I vow to Gad I believe I shall be in love with her in earnest. Have you made no discovery yet, Mrs. Eccles?' pursued he. 'There is certainly some mystery in the case, and a love mystery it must be; for women are not even faithful to their own secrets, unless an amour is the business, and then they are impentrateble.'

'Your lordship may be sure,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'that I have spared no pains to discover who she is; but she is excessively reserved, and talks so little, that there is no probability of

'entrapping her: yet I think there is one way by which your curiosity may be satisfied. Your lordship has seen a gay, slightly lady with her, of whom she is very fond.'

'What, that ugly creature!' said my lord, 'that fastened upon me in your shop; do you mean her? Is Miss Benson fond of that thing?'—'Oh! very fond,' replied Mrs. Eccles; 'they were shut up together four hours this very morning.'

'Then depend upon it she is the confidant,' said his lordship. 'Oh! I guess your scheme; you would have me bribe her?'

'Bribe her, my lord!' repeated Mrs. Eccles; 'she seems to be a woman of some fashion. I dare say you would affront her extremely by offering her a bribe.'

'I am very sure,' interrupted his lordship, 'that she will not be able to resist the bribe I shall offer her: I will flatter her, my dear Mrs. Eccles, till I not only become master of all her friend's secrets, but even her own; but how shall I get an opportunity of talking to her alone?'

'I will engage,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'that it will not be long before she is here again; and if your lordship should happen to be below when she comes, I fancy you would not find it difficult to detain her a little while from her friend.'

'Well,' said my lord, 'I leave it to you to manage this interview for me: when I know who this Miss Benson is, I can make my approaches accordingly; but when do you expect her down stairs again?'—'Not till supper-time,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'she is never weary of being alone.'—'Ah! that is a bad sign,' said he; 'I doubt I have a rival. Well, I will look in upon you at ten o'clock; perhaps I may find her with you.'

Mrs. Eccles assuring him she would engage her till that time, if possible, he went away humming an opera air, but with less vacuity of thought than usual, Miss Benson being so much in his head, that, if he had been accustomed to reflection, he would have concluded she was in his heart also, and that he was in love with her in earnest.

Henrietta in the mean time was employed in writing her letter to Mr. Damer,

Damer, to whom she gave a faithful account of all that had happened to her, and earnestly intreated his good offices towards effecting a reconciliation between her aunt and her. The inconveniences she saw herself exposed to in her present situation made her so desirous of this happy event, that her letter was almost a continued repetition of solicitations for that purpose. She begged him, in case he did not return to England, to write to her aunt, and endeavour to soften her, assuring him that she pretended to no greater liberty than what an obedient daughter might expect from a parent; being resolved to obey her will in every thing, provided she might not be compelled to marry the old baronet, nor confined in a nunnery with a view to the change of her religion.

She expressed her satisfaction in the polite behaviour of his son to her, whom she would consider, she said, as her guardian in his absence, and would take no step without his advice and concurrence.

She had finished her letter long before the milliner's usual hour of supper; but being resolved to go down no more that evening, she spread letters and papers upon the table, as if she still continued extremely busy. Mrs. Eccles, upon entering her chamber to know if she was ready for supper, found her with the pen still in her hand; and was a good deal mortified to hear her say, that, having dined so late, she would not sup that night, but would finish her letters before she went to bed.

Mrs. Eccles did not think proper to press her; for her extreme reserve inspired her with a kind of awe, that made her cautious of giving her the least disgust; and Henrietta taking leave of her at her chamber-door for the night, she went away in great concern for the disappointment his lordship would meet with.

It was indeed a very mortifying disappointment to him, for his impatience to see Miss Courteney had brought him back much sooner than he had intended; and Mrs. Eccles, when she came down stairs, found him already in her parlour. When he heard the young lady's resolution, not to appear again that night, he took an unceremonious leave of his complaisant landlady, and joined his company again at White's, wondering to find himself in so ill an humour, on so slight an occasion, and that dice

and Burgundy were scarce sufficient to call off his thoughts from this coy unknown, whom yet he did not despair of gaining.

CHAP. VI.

A VERY SHORT CHAPTER.

HENRIETTA, upon her coming down next morning to breakfast, was informed by Mrs. Eccles, that a gentleman had been enquiring for her that morning; but hearing she was not up, had left word that he would call again. She did not doubt but it was Mr. Damer, and was a little confused that his punctuality should so much exceed hers in an affair that immediately concerned her; but the truth was, the young merchant's impatience to see her had outstripped time, and he came much earlier than she had reason to expect him.

She retired immediately after breakfast, desiring that the gentleman might be shewn up stairs when he came again; for Mrs. Eccles, at her request, had made a small alteration in her apartment, and put her bed in an adjoining closet, that she might with more propriety receive a visit in her own room.

She was scarce got up stairs, when Mr. Damer was introduced: she apologized for the trouble he had in calling twice; and delivering him her letter, recommended it to his care with extreme earnestness, assuring him, she should be very unhappy till she had an answer. She then enquired more particularly concerning the visit Mr. Danvers had made him, anxious to collect from what he said what impression her flight had made upon her aunt.

'I will not flatter you Miss,' said Mr. Damer. 'Lady Meadows is extremely enraged. Mr. Danvers mentioned nothing of a design to put you into a convent; but owned that your aunt had a very advantageous match in view for you, which you rejected: and——'

'Pray go on, Sir,' said Henrietta, observing that he hesitated.

'Your aunt will have it, Madam,' pursued he, 'that your affections are engaged. I cannot believe that a young lady of your good sense would make an improper choice. I should

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'be very glad to be able to convince my father that nothing of this kind is the case. Excuse me, Miss, I am anxious for your happiness; it would give me infinite joy to find that your aunt is mistaken.'

'My aunt has no reason, Sir, for her suspicions,' replied Henrietta; 'but if my affections were engaged, why should she think I had made an improper choice?'—'Ah! Miss——' eagerly interrupted Mr. Damer.

'I hope, Sir,' said Miss Courteney, gravely, 'you will believe me, when I declare that my aunt's fears are without foundation; it concerns me greatly that your father should not entertain the same idle suspicions; and, were he here, I am sure I could convince him.'

'Dear Miss,' interrupted Mr. Damer, 'I cannot suffer you to go on; do not imagine that I am not convinced. I had doubts, but you will excuse them; my great concern for your happiness was the cause. Rely upon me, I beg you; I will take care my father shall not be prejudiced, and till his return I am your guardian.'

Henrietta, upon a little reflection, was more pleased than offended at the doubts he so candidly acknowledged; in so young a man, such plainness and sincerity were far more agreeable than the refinements of compliment and flattery, and more suitable to the character in which he desired to be considered, and in which she did consider him. She thanked him for a solicitude, which she said was so advantageous to her; and, to shew him that she wished to give him all imaginable satisfaction with regard to her conduct, she entered into a particular detail of the situation she had been in with her aunt, whose views, with regard to her, she explained: she slightly touched upon the character of the chaplain, and imputed to his great influence over her aunt the rash and severe resolutions she had taken against her.

She was proceeding to justify herself for having left her aunt's house, when Mr. Damer interrupted her with some emotion: 'Every reasonable person,' Miss, said he, 'that knows your motives for taking this step, will not only hold you excused, but will even applaud you for not sacrificing yourself to riches.'

'I am sure,' said Henrietta, 'my

aunt would hear reason, were it not for that invidious chaplain, who fills her with suspicions, and animates her resentment. Oh, that Mr. Damer was come!'

'I hope,' said the young merchant, 'that we shall see him shortly; but in the mean time, Miss, let me know how I can be useful to you: Do you like your present lodgings? Are the people such as you approve? Let me know if you have any inclination to remove, and I will endeavour to settle you somewhere that will be agreeable to my father. I suppose you would have no objection to lodge with an acquaintance of his, and where you will be near him.'

'No, certainly,' said Miss Courteney, 'it would be highly agreeable to me.'—'Well, Miss,' said Mr. Damer, rising, 'I will wait on you again in a day or two. But perhaps you have occasion for money; I have brought some with me; pray do not put yourself to any inconvenience, but draw for what sums you have occasion.'

'The trifle, Sir,' said Henrietta, blushing, 'that is in your father's hands, will not admit of my drawing very largely: however, I will venture to take up twenty pounds, because I have occasion to purchase some trifling things; for all my cloaths are at my aunt's, and I am in great hopes she will not send them after me: that would look indeed,' said she, sighing, 'as if I must never expect to return again; and I am resolved not to send for them, that it may appear I do expect and wish it.'

Mr. Damer, upon hearing this, pressed her to take forty guineas; but she said, twenty would do, having some money by her. He then took leave of her, with a promise to see her again soon; and left her greatly pleased with his friendly behaviour, and with the prospect of being soon with persons less obnoxious to her than Mrs. Eccles.

She had scarcely deposited her money in her desk, when Miss Woodby bolted into the room with her usual robust liveliness. Indeed her spirits were particularly exhilarated that day, having had the dear delight of conversing a whole hour with a beau, who said the civilest things to her imaginable; a piece of good fortune she did not often meet with, and for which, though her vanity did not suffer

suffer her to find it out, she was wholly indebted to her fair friend, the beau being no other than the young lord who lodged in the house, with whom she had been engaged in conversation great part of the time that Mr. Damer was with Miss Courteney. And if the reader is curious to know what passed between them, he will be fully informed in the next chapter.

C H A P. X.

WHICH GIVES THE READER A SPECIMEN OF FEMALE FRIENDSHIP.

MR. Damer had been about half an hour with Miss Courteney, when Miss Woodby came to pay her a morning visit. As soon as Mrs. Eccles saw a chair set her down at the door, she flew up stairs to acquaint her noble lodger with her arrival; he instantly followed her down, and meeting Miss Woodby at the bottom of the stairs, affected a joyful surprize at his good fortune in seeing her so unexpectedly again.

'The lady you are going to visit,' said he, 'is engaged with company, I believe; but I am resolved you shall not go away,' pursued he, taking her hand, and leading her into the parlour. 'I was so charmed with your conversation the first time I saw you, that it is not probable I will lose this opportunity of renewing our acquaintance.'

'Oh! your lordship is very obliging,' said Miss Woodby, suffering herself to be led into the parlour; while her transport at finding herself treated with so much gallantry, and her passionate desire of pleasing, threw her into such ridiculous affectation, that every limb and feature were distorted. Compliment, to which she was very little used, acting like strong liquors upon a weak head, she became so intoxicated, that she hardly knew what she did, which, joined to a natural awkwardness, produced the most absurd blunders in her behaviour; so that, endeavouring to trip with a lively motion to her seat, she overturned a light mahogany table that was in her way, and heard the crash of the china that was on it with very little emotion: the pleasure of shewing herself to the greatest advantage, absolutely engrossing her; and so unreasonably did she return his lordship's polite bow, when he had

seated her in her chair, that their foreheads struck against each other with a force like the concussion of two rocks; but this accident, no more than the former, disturbed Miss Woodby's enjoyment of her present happiness; and, wholly insensible to the pain of her forehead, she immediately entered into conversation with his lordship, asking him, with the liveliest air imaginable, if he had been at Ranelagh last night; never once making the least reflection upon what he had told her of her friend's being engaged with company, which, as she knew her situation, might well have raised her curiosity.

The beau told her, he was not there; 'but you and Miss Benson were, I suppose,' added he.

'Now your lordship mentions Miss Benson,' said she, without answering his question, 'pray tell me how you like her; is she not very handsome?'

'Yes,' replied my lord, 'she is handsome; but,' added he, looking full at her, 'she wants a certain lady's agreeable vivacity.'

'Oh, your servant, my lord,' said Miss Woodby, making the application immediately; 'but really, as your lordship observes, she wants vivacity; there is something heavy and lumpish in her.'

'Yet she is genteel,' said my lord. 'Oh! extremely genteel,' cried Miss Woodby; 'but does not your lordship think she is rather too tall? being so slender as she is, does not that height give her a certain awkwardness?—But I really think she has one of the finest complexions in the world!'

'Has she not rather too much bloom,' said my lord. 'Why, yes,' replied Miss Woodby; 'I think her complexion wants delicacy; but no objection can be made to her eyes, you must own, except that they are rather too large, and roll about heavily.'

'Upon the whole,' said my lord, 'Miss Benson is tolerable; but I perceive you are extremely fond of her by your partiality.'

'Oh, my lord,' said Miss Woodby, 'we are the greatest friends in the world; I conceived a violent friendship for her the first moment I saw her. You cannot imagine how ardent my friendships are!'

'That is bad news for your lover,' said my lord; 'for love and friendship,

'the wife say, exclude each other; but I hope Miss Benson makes a proper return to so much affection.'

'Oh! we are united in the strongest bands of friendship,' said Miss Woodby; 'the dear creature has not a thought that she conceals from me: and though I have not been acquainted with her a week, she has intrusted me with all her affairs.'

'Indeed!' said my lord, 'not acquainted a week, and so communicative! Are you sure, my dear Miss Woodby, that this young lady is not a little silly?'

'I cannot say,' replied Miss Woodby, 'that her understanding is the best in the world; but she has a very good heart.'

'Your own is very good, I do not doubt,' said my lord, 'which leads you to make so favourable a judgment of another's. However, as she has laid open her affairs to you, you may, from the conduct she has avowed, collect your opinion of her.'

'Very true,' said Miss Woodby; 'and I do assure your lordship, that I cannot help approving of her conduct, because her motives were certainly just: though the ill-judging world may perhaps condemn her for running away from her aunt; and, from her hiding herself in a lodging, assuming another name, and such little circumstances, may take occasion to censure her; yet I am persuaded in my own mind that she is blameless.'

'Benson is not her name then?' said my lord, affecting great indifference.

'Oh, no, my lord,' said Miss Woodby, 'her name is Courteney. But bless me! what have I done! I hope, my lord, you will be secret; I did not intend to tell your lordship Miss Benson's true name. I would not for the world violate that friendship I have vowed to her.'

'Depend upon it, Madam,' said my lord, 'I will be secret as the grave. It is of no consequence to me to know her name; I shall never think of it again. But to be sure the poor girl is to be pitied. And so she ran away from her aunt; who is her aunt, pray?'

'Her aunt's name is Meadows,' said Miss Woodby, 'Lady Meadows; do you know her?'

'Not I,' said my lord, throwing himself into a careless posture, and hum-

ming an air, as if his attention was wholly disengaged; when suddenly turning again to Miss Woodby with a smile—

'Why,' said he, 'should not you and I be as good friends as Miss Benson and you are? our acquaintance is not of a much shorter date, and perhaps commenced nearly in the same manner.'

'I protest,' said Miss Woodby, 'and so it did; for I first saw your lordship in Mrs. Eccles's shop, and I happened to meet Miss Benson in a stage-coach about four days ago.'

'And there your acquaintance began?' said my lord; 'you have improved it well since, if she has really been ingenuous enough to let you into the true state of her affairs. I suppose there is a lover in the case.'

'A lover there certainly is,' said Miss Woodby; 'but he was of her aunt's chusing; and it is from this lover she fled.'

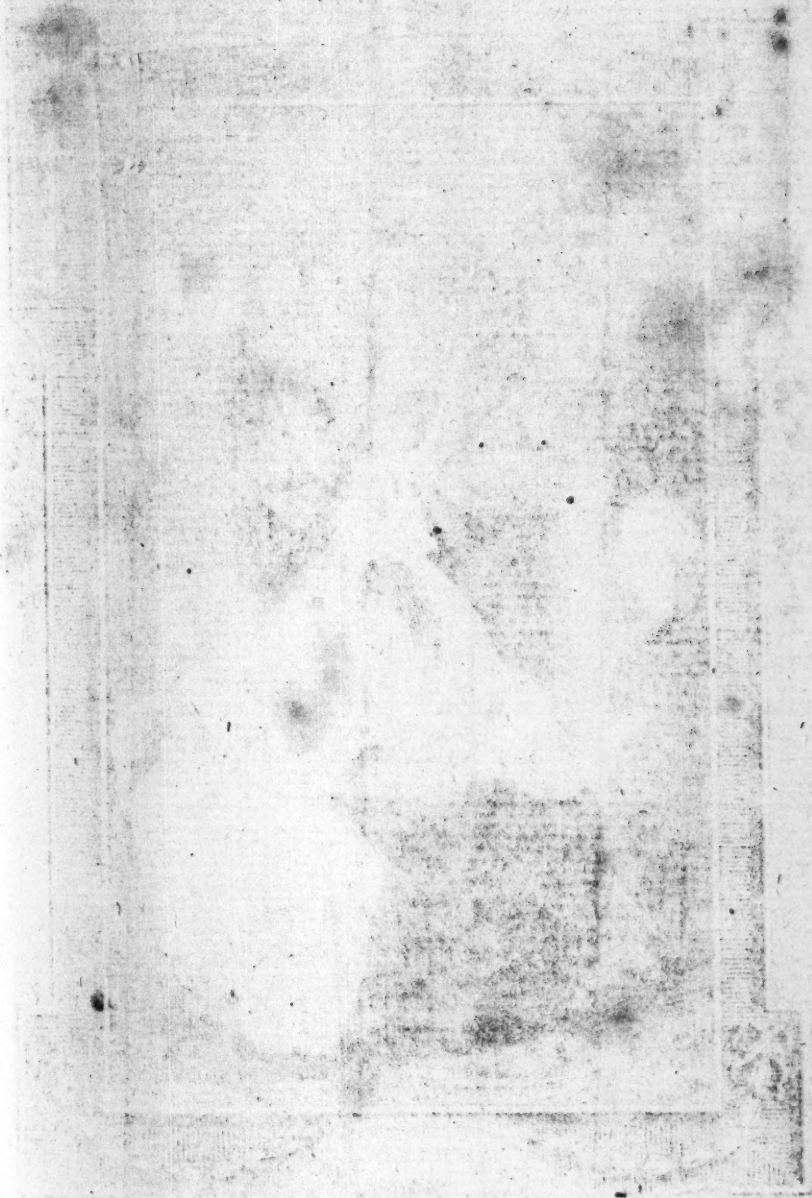
'O brave girl!' said my lord; 'but is she not fled to a lover of her own chusing?'—'No, I believe not,' said Miss Woodby.

'Well,' said my lord, 'I fancy she has deceived you, and that the gentleman who is with her now is her lover; he is a plain sort of man, Mrs. Eccles says, and looks like a merchant.'

'Oh!' said Miss Woodby, 'it is Mr. Damer her guardian, I suppose.'—'But this is a young man,' said my lord. 'Then perhaps it is her brother,' said Miss Woodby, 'who was abroad with a nobleman, and is now returned.'

'I think I hear him coming down stairs,' said my lord, 'I have a mind to see him as he goes out.' Saying this, he bowed and ran into the shop, leaving Miss Woodby a little confused at his abrupt departure; and now, for the first time, she reflected that she had been indiscreet, and revealed too much of her friend's situation; but being incapable of taking any great interest in the concerns of another, this thought did not affect her much; her spirits had been put into such a violent flurry by my lord's complaisant address to her, that she only considered her own satisfaction in holding him in conversation; and if he had come back to her again, she would have given him all the remaining part of Miss Courteney's history, without reflecting upon the baseness of the

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the part she was acting, and only sensible to the pleasure of engaging the attention of a man: for, by the fatal concurrence of a disagreeable figure, and much affectation, she was generally neglected by that sex whom she took all imaginable pains to please.

His lordship, at his going out of the room, had no otherwise taken leave of her than by a running bow, which left her some faint hopes of his return; but seeing him put on his hat and go hastily out of the shop, she concluded that he did not intend to come back: therefore she went up stairs to pay a visit to her friend, to whose account of her meeting with young Mr. Damer, and his friendly behaviour to her, she gave so little attention, her thoughts being wholly engrossed by the agreeable young nobleman, that when she left her, which was but a very short time afterwards, she scarce remembered any thing that had passed between them.

CHAP. XI.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE IS IN GREAT DISTRESS.

IN the mean time the young lord, having an extreme curiosity to see the man whom he suspected to be his rival, followed Mr. Damer down the street, and had a full view of him as he crossed into another. He found he was young, and had an agreeable air, but there was a kind of peniveness on his countenance, that did not seem to suit with the condition of a favourite lover. He readily admitted this thought, because it favoured his own wishes; he reflected on what he had heard from the communicative Miss Woodby, and concluded he had no reason to despair.

A young woman eloped from her relations, with nobody about her of authority enough to controul or direct her actions; these were very favourable circumstances for a man of intrigue: and he resolved to be no longer kept at a distance by a reserve, which he imputed either to affectation or artifice, and which a suitable share of boldness could only overcome.

Having settled the plan of his operations with Mrs. Eccles, whom he had strongly engaged in his interests, he re-

tired to his own lodgings; for those he had at the milliner's were only hired to facilitate his designs upon Miss Courteney.

That young lady finding herself free from his intrusion, and being less disgusted with Mrs. Eccles's behaviour than usual, who was very much upon her guard, and had her reasons for being so, passed the day with more tranquillity of mind than her situation had hitherto permitted, and condescended, at Mrs. Eccles's intreaty, to spend two hours with her after supper at piquet.

In the mean time his lordship had conveyed himself into a closet in her apartment, and about eleven o'clock saw the unsuspecting fair one enter with a candle in her hand, and, after cautiously fastening the door, sit down composedly to read.

Her beauty, which was of that sort which inspires respect as well as love, the innocence of her deportment, her security amidst that danger which threatened her, excited sentiments that made him half ashamed of his design. Charmed with beholding her in so agreeable an attitude, her fair face reclined on one of her hands, her elbow leaning on the table, her book in the other hand, which she seemed intently to read, he opened the closet-door a little way, that he might have the pleasure of contemplating her at leisure.

This motion was not unobserved by Henrietta; she raised her eyes off her book, which made him hastily pull the door close again. Henrietta, now convinced that there was somebody in her closet, started up, and, dropping her book, cried out aloud for help. His lordship immediately rushed out of the closet, threw himself at her feet, and begged her not to be frightened. Indignation succeeded to terror; her face, which was all pale and wan before, was now crimsoned over; her eyes shot indignant flames at the insolent invader; but, in a moment, recollecting the danger she was exposed to, again her face was overspread with paleness, and an universal trembling seized her. The young lord, who observed the beautiful emotion, and was beginning to be shocked at the boldness of his attempt, again conjured her not to be afraid, and vowed he would leave her room: but Henrietta, on whom these assurances made no impression,

pression, spring from him to the window, and, throwing up the sash, cried out as loud as she was able.

‘Miss Courteney,’ said he rising, but keeping at a distance for fear of alarming her more, ‘do not indiscreetly expose yourself; I swear by Heaven I will leave your room.’

‘What!’ cried she, amazed to the last degree to hear him pronounce her name; ‘you know me then, and yet have dared to insult me thus! But leave me, my lord, this instant leave me, or I will raise the neighbourhood by my cries.’

‘Charming creature!’ said his lordship, looking on her with tenderness and awe, ‘I do know you, and I know your virtue now; I will leave you: believe me I am sorry for the terror I have put you into. Grant me a moment’s audience to-morrow; I have something to say to you that will convince you I am desirous of meriting your pardon.’

He then bowed respectfully, and, unlocking the door, went down stairs; Henrietta all the time keeping close to the window, that she might be ready to call for help, if he shewed any design of staying in her apartment: nor, till she heard him enter his own, and shut the door after him, durst she venture from her post to secure her door, which she did with the utmost precipitation, making it as fast as she could; and then shutting her window, for her cries had not been heard, she passed the night in a chair, resolving not to go to bed any more in that house.

The dangers she was exposed to, made her almost repent of having fled from her aunt’s tyranny; and mortified as she was by such shocking insults, she thought it would have been a less misfortune to be the wife of Sir Isaac Darby, or the inmate of a gloomy convent, than the avowed object of a libertine’s passion.

Surprised as she was that my lord was acquainted with her name, and anxious to know by what means he had made the discovery, yet it never once occurred to her that Miss Woodby had betrayed her. Her generous mind was incapable of suggesting such a suspicion, and she was even doubtful whether Mrs. Eccles was privy to his insolent attempt: so difficult it is for innocence to fathom the depths of guilt.

Amidst the melancholy reflections which her situation gave rise to, she drew

some consolation from Mr. Damer’s friendly concern for her. She resolved to go to him in the morning, and claim his promise of settling her immediately with one of his father’s friends, yet without revealing the mortifying treatment she had been exposed to, and from which she had extricated herself: for true virtue blushes to own it’s conquests, because those conquests are proofs of it’s having been attempted. These various thoughts kept her waking the whole night; but towards morning she fell into a slumber, from whence she was roused by a loud knocking at her chamber-door. She rose instantly from her chair, where she had passed the night; and perceiving the day was far advanced, opened the door, and let in her landlady; who excused herself for disturbing her, being apprehensive, she said, that she was ill, from her continuing so long in her chamber.

‘It would not be surprising,’ said Henrietta coolly, ‘if I should be ill, considering the fright I was in last night. Did you not hear me cry out, Mrs. Eccles?’

‘Dear heart,’ said Mrs. Eccles, smiling, ‘hear you cry out! why, what was the matter? some groundless apprehensions of thieves, I suppose: but there is no danger; my house has very good fastenings; I have lain in it many a night by myself, I assure you.’

‘That may be,’ said Miss Courteney; ‘but I am resolved never to lie in it another night: it would be well, Mrs. Eccles, if you were a little more cautious to whom you let your lodgings; rakes are dangerous company.’

‘I hope I have no such persons in my house,’ said Mrs. Eccles. ‘I have been insulted in your house,’ said Henrietta, ‘which obliges me to hasten my departure from it. Pray let your maid get me a coach to the door.’

‘Why, you are not going, Madam, are you?’ said Mrs. Eccles, pertly. ‘Not immediately,’ replied Miss Courteney, ‘but I shall go to-day; at present I am going out upon business.’

‘And why, pray, will you go to-day, Madam?’ said Mrs. Eccles, still more saucily. ‘Because,’ said Miss Courteney, who did not like the accent in which she spoke, ‘I do not chuse to stay in a house where I am liable to be insulted.’

‘I hope you intend to cast no aspersions upon my character, Madam,’ said

said Mrs. Eccles: 'I would have you to know that I value my character as much as any body, though I am not so prudish as some folks.'

'Will you order your maid to get me a coach?' said Henrietta, who was extremely apprehensive of some farther rudeness from this woman; 'I am in haste.'

'Insulted, indeed!' repeated Mrs. Eccles: 'fine airs for folks to give themselves, when nobody knows who they are, or what they are.' Henrietta finding that her insolence increased, told her she would go down herself, and send the maid for a coach, and was passing by her for that purpose; but Mrs. Eccles placed herself between her and the door: 'No, no, my fine scrupulous young lady,' says she, 'you shall not stir, I assure you.'

'Sure,' said Miss Courteney, trembling, yet endeavouring to seem very courageous, 'you will not dare to detain me!'—'Indeed but I will,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'till I am paid; I know nothing of you but your airs and affectation; I may never see you again, perhaps.'

The young lady immediately pulled out her purse, blushing at the new indignity that was offered her; and taking out a guinea, 'I agreed with you, Mrs. Eccles,' said she, 'for a guinea a week: here is a guinea for you, and now am I at liberty to go out?'

'Perhaps not,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'you have aspersed me with scandalous reflections, and I can tell you, Madam, I will have satisfaction.'—'Lord bless me!' said Miss Courteney, who was now frightened out of her seeming courage, 'what shall I do! what will become of me?'

This exclamation immediately brought up his lordship, who had been listening at the door of his apartment, and heard part of what had passed.

As soon as Henrietta saw him her terror increased, not doubting but he came as an auxiliary to her landlady; but the contemptuous look he gave Mrs. Eccles, removed her apprehensions.

'What do you mean,' said he, in an angry tone, 'by treating this young lady in such a manner?—Miss Benson, do not be uneasy: if you are going, you shall meet with no hindrance; I ask your pardon for being the cause of your fright last night; I do assure you I am sincerely sorry for it.'

'I hope you are, my lord,' said Miss Courteney, 'and I thank you for this reasonable interposition.' Saying this, she hastened down stairs, and dispatched the maid for a coach; while she stepped into the milliner's parlour to settle her dress a little, and to put on her hat and cardinal, which she had brought down in her hand.

CHAP. XII.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY GOES FORWARD.

HENRIETTA was waiting impatiently for the coach, when the young nobleman entered the room. 'You are going, then, Miss?' said he, sighing. 'I waited at home all this morning for an opportunity of seeing you, that I might recommend such a resolution as I find your prudence has suggested to you.' Mrs. Eccles is not a proper woman for you to lodge with, and this I believe her behaviour to-day has convinced you of; had she not made the discovery to you herself, I should have done it, partly to repair the affront I have been so unhappy to offer you, and partly to secure you against the like, by letting you know that you are in the house of a woman of doubtful character.'

This language bore the marks of so much prudence and sincerity, that Henrietta could not help being affected with it; and accordingly she expressed a grateful sense of his concern for her.

'I have something else to say to you,' said he, 'which possibly will surprize you more; but it is necessary you should know it, to avoid farther inconveniences, by a misplaced confidence: it was your friend Miss Woodby that informed me of your true name and circumstances. I see you are shocked; she has indeed betrayed you, but less from malice, I believe, than folly. I am master of your secret, Miss Courteney,' said he, speaking lower, and taking her hand; 'but you may depend upon it, I shall make no other use of it, but to serve you in whatever way you shall direct. Command my utmost services; dearest creature, dispose of me, my life, and fortune: never did I feel a real passion for any of your sex before.'

'My

‘My lord,’ interrupted Miss Courteney, concerned to find him again upon this strain, which destroyed the hope of his disinterestedness; ‘since you know my situation, you must also know that such discourse is extremely embarrassing to me. I am at present under the displeasure of my friends, without whose consent I will never admit of an address of this kind.’ She looked at him here; and observing him in some confusion, for indeed his intentions were not of that sort that could be communicated to her friends, she blushed at the humiliating idea that apparent confusion raised in her mind; but recovering herself—

‘I am contented,’ said she, ‘that your lordship should know my name, since chance has ordered it so, and I depend upon your honour not to mention me. I must also acknowledge myself obliged to you for the discovery you have made of Miss Woodby’s treachery; it is a very useful discovery, for otherwise I should still have confided in her, and been again betrayed.’ His lordship was going to reply with great eagerness, when the maid came in, and informed Miss Courteney, that a coach was at the door.

‘You are going, then?’ said he, with a melancholy look; but, ere he could proceed, Mrs. Eccles entered, and, with a countenance and voice altered to great obsequiousness, told Henrietta, that the gentleman who had been there yesterday enquired for her. ‘O how lucky is this!’ exclaimed Miss Courteney: ‘let him be shewn up stairs, I’ll wait on him.’ The milliner having withdrawn, the young lord caught hold of Henrietta’s hand as she was leaving the room—

‘And can you be so cruel,’ said he, ‘to quit me thus without giving me the least hope?’—‘Pray, my lord,’ said Miss Courteney, drawing her hand from him with an air disdainful enough, ‘no more of this idle gallantry.’

‘Who is this gentleman that enquires for you?’ said he, with a beseeching air.

‘My lord,’ replied Miss Courteney, ‘the gentleman is my friend.’—‘Say rather your lover,’ said he: ‘Oh! what joy you discovered when you heard he was come!’—‘I had reason for being rejoiced,’ interrupted she; ‘he is my guardian, who has the care

of my affairs.’—‘Your guardian,’ repeated his lordship, ‘may I not know his name?’

‘He is the guardian of my person rather than my fortune,’ said Henrietta; ‘the poor trifle that I can call my own, does not deserve the name of fortune. It is my unhappiness,’ added she, sighing, ‘to be in a situation that exposes me to unworthy suspicions, and subjects me to humiliating explanations. You know my name, my lord, therefore you may know the name of the person under whose protection I shall be for the future; Mr. Damer is my guardian, he is a considerable merchant in the city.’

‘Enough,’ cried the lover, kissing her hand in a rapture, while she was struggling to be gone from him, ‘I know him. Say only,’ pursued he, still endeavouring to detain her, ‘that you will permit me to see you again.’—‘Excuse me, my lord,’ said Henrietta, breaking from him, ‘I cannot grant your request; though I must repeat the one I made to you, Take no notice of your having met with me, and suffer me to be obliged to you for your secrecy.’

‘O! doubt me not,’ said he, following her to the stairs, and taking a passionate leave of her with his eyes, ‘I will obey you.’

Henrietta answered no otherwise than by a courtesy, and hastened up to Mr. Damer, wondering at this unexpected visit, and indulging a flattering hope that his father was returned.

Mr. Damer met her as she entered the room, and, bowing more gravely than usual, told her, that he was afraid he kept her at home, being informed by her landlady that she was just going out.

‘I was going out,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘but it was to you.’—‘Were you!’ replied he, with a smile of pleasure that beamed over his countenance; ‘have you any new commands for me? I am glad I came so seasonably.’

‘But tell me, Sir,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘is my worthy guardian come back? have you any news for me? This visit was unexpected.’

The young merchant was a little disconcerted at this question; for he had reasons which he did not care to own for visiting her so soon again: he had a glimpse of the young lord, as he passed by the parlour the day before; he saw him

him come out of the house; observed that he followed him, and looked at him with an inquisitive eye. He began to suspect that this gay gentleman had some design upon Miss Courteney, and that she might have an inclination for him. He therefore resolved to take her immediately out of his way, and had already secured to her a safe retreat.

'I wish,' said he, 'that I had any better news to bring you, than that I have provided you a lodging with the wife of one of my father's factors; she is a sensible woman, and will treat you with great respect. I am persuaded my father will be pleased to find you there.'—'And I am ready,' said Henrietta, eagerly, 'to go immediately; for my intended visit to you to-day was to press you to find some suitable lodging for me. I don't know the person with whom I am at present; and she has no woman-lodger in the house but myself.'

'You have a great deal of prudence,' Miss, said Mr. Damer, who was indeed excessively pleased to find her so desirous of going; 'I fancy you can soon settle with your landlady; and we will make use of that hackney coach which stands at the door, and which you sent for, it seems.'—'I have settled already with her,' said Miss Courteney; 'and this small parcel you see will be all my luggage, except the money you paid me yesterday,' added she, smiling, and unlocking her desk to take it out.

Mr. Damer very politely took up her little parcel, and carried it down stairs. Mean time Miss Courteney was so much mistress of her resentment as to take a civil leave of Mrs. Eccles; and Mr. Damer, who was waiting for her at the door, handed her into the coach, and came in himself, after he had given the man directions where to drive.

The young nobleman, who was standing at one of his windows, saw her depart with great uneasiness. She was now in the hands of her guardian, and consequently his approaches would be more difficult; but youth and fortune think every thing attainable. His passion for Henrietta was violent enough to make him run all hazards to obtain her on any terms but marriage. Nothing is more easy than for love to conquer reason; it's greatest triumph is when it is victorious over interest. The Earl of —, father

to this young lord, was negotiating a match for him with a young woman of very great fortune, the daughter of an eminent packer in the city. The noble youth, stimulated by forty thousand pounds, had pleaded his passion with such success, that the lady preferred him to all his titled rivals, and he had a great many, from the baronet up to the duke. The honest packer, sacrificing his ambition to his daughter's inclinations, chose rather to let her follow her taste, and be only a countess, than become father-in-law to a duke by crossing it: an admirable instance of humility it must be confessed, and scarce to be equalled but by that of the nobleman, who, with such generous contempt of hereditary honours, solicited his alliance; but, happily for the reformation of manners, such instances are not now very rare.

This marriage therefore being in great forwardness, it behoved the young lord to be cautious in prosecuting his scheme upon Miss Courteney. He was convinced she was virtuous; and that the only way to undermine that virtue was to make himself sure of her heart, before he discovered that his repentance was but feigned, and his intentions not honourable; when the passion she had for him would excuse, if not justify, an attempt that passion forced him to make; firmly depending on the poet's maxim, that *the faults of love by love are justified*.

The great point was to bring her to admit of his addresses without the knowledge of her friends, for which he could urge reasons sufficient; and when that point was gained, he might securely reckon upon success: for a young woman who engages in a private correspondence of that kind, deprives herself of the suggestions of prudence, the caution of experience, the counsels of wisdom, and the restraint of authority; her whole conduct is then influenced by the passion with which she is actuated, which is at once her impulse and her guide.

Our lover, having given some sighs to the departure of his mistress, comforted himself in the hope of seeing her soon, with more advantage, since he had in some degree secured her confidence by the disinterested advice he had given her with regard to Mrs. Eccles; and having now no farther occasion for the apartment he had hired in that house, he quitted it immediately, not without discovering in his behaviour to her at parting some part

of that contempt which even the greatest libertines feel for such as assist their criminal designs.

Mean time Henrietta, extremely pleased with the care and attention of her new guardian, was by him conducted to a large well-furnished house in the city, and received with great respect by the mistress of it, who was a middle-aged woman, with a benevolent aspect and an easy agreeable behaviour.

'Mrs. Willis,' said Mr. Damer, leading in Miss Courteney, 'permit me to introduce to you this young lady, my father's ward, and at present under my care: I hope you will make every thing agreeable to her during the time she stays with you.—Miss Benson,' added he, 'I need not give Mrs. Willis any other recommendation to you, than that she is a friend of my father's, and very much esteemed by him.'

Henrietta, though in some confusion at being introduced under a feigned name to a friend of Mr. Damer's, saluted her with a graceful air, and replied to the compliments she made her with great politeness; but took the first opportunity of her withdrawing, to ask Mr. Damer, why he concealed her true name from a friend of his father's?

'Mr. Damer asked her pardon for not having consulted her before on that subject; but said, that by still continuing the name of Benson, she would be more secure from the search her aunt might make for her.'

'Alas! Sir,' said Miss Courteney, 'I am afraid my aunt is too much offended to be at any pains to find me out. I am more apprehensive of the contrivances of Mr. Danvers; he, no doubt, has strong reasons for putting her upon such harsh measures. While I was alone and unprotected, I thought it necessary to conceal myself, since it was not impossible but I might have been forced away; but I am sure no such attempt will be made, when it is known that I am under my guardian's protection. I think therefore this gentlewoman ought to be acquainted with my name. I would avoid as much as possible the appearance of mystery. I shall never recollect, without pain, the sad necessity that has reduced me to it.'

'It will not be prudent,' said Mr. Damer, 'to alter our measures now: I have called you Miss Benson; the dis-

covery of your true name will come with more propriety from my father, when he has accommodated matters between your aunt and you: we may expect a letter from him in a day or two, in which he will probably fix the time of his return. In the mean while, I hope you will find yourself agreeably situated here. I have agreed for your board and lodging.'

'At a moderate price, I hope,' said Miss Courteney; 'my circumstances do not entitle me to great expence.'—'I have taken care of that,' said Mr. Damer. Mrs. Willis coming in that moment, he recommended Miss Courteney to her care, promising, when he heard from his father, to come immediately with the news. He then took his leave, and Mrs. Willis conducted her fair lodger to another parlour, where the cloth was laid for dinner, and introduced two pretty children to her, a boy and a girl, with whom the young lady was extremely pleased.

There was in the countenance of this woman so much sweetness and complacency, and such an unaffected politeness in her behaviour, that Henrietta found herself insensibly disposed to like her, and was pleased to hear her fall naturally into an account of herself with a frankness and simplicity that denoted the goodness of her heart.

From what she said, Miss Courteney collected that she had made a marriage of choice rather than of prudence, and that industry had supplied the place of fortune. She found she was under great obligations to the elder Mr. Damer, who had settled her husband in an advantageous way at Leghorn, where he acted as his factor, and had enabled her to furnish that large house, in a very genteel manner, for the reception of such merchants as came from abroad, and were by him recommended to lodge with her. Her extreme tenderness for her husband, which had hurried her to Leghorn upon hearing that he was ill, that she might have the satisfaction of attending him herself, and her anxiety for her children, which brought her back as soon as he was recovered, that she might re-assume her care of them, were qualities which won her the esteem of Miss Courteney. She marked with what becoming reserve she slightly touched upon her family and connections, which were very genteel, and by which Henrietta accounted for the

the easy politeness of her manners and behaviour, so seldom found in persons of her rank.

The young lady then turned the discourse upon her guardian's son, whose character she was desirous of being acquainted with. Mrs. Willis told her, that he was a sober diligent young man, and though the heir of immense riches, yet applied himself to business with as much industry as if he had his fortune to make: that he had for several years transacted his father's business in Holland, from whence he was, but lately returned; and that he traded largely for himself.

'Before I went to Leghorn,' added she, 'there was some talk of his being to be married to the daughter of a very rich citizen; but since my return, which was about a week ago, I have heard nothing of it, not having seen Mr. Damer till the day that he came to tell me I should be so happy as to have you, Madam, for my lodger.'

Miss Courteney having passed this day more agreeably than she had done any since she had left her aunt, was at night conducted by Mrs. Willis to a genteel apartment, consisting of a bed-chamber and dressing-room. She dismissed the maid whom Mrs. Willis ordered to attend and undress her; and being greatly fatigued for want of rest the preceding night, lost all her cares, her anxieties, and resentments, in the sweet oblivion of a calm and uninterrupted sleep.

C H A P. XIII.

THE HISTORY STILL ADVANCES.

HENRIETTA, though an early riser, and though she rose next morning earlier than usual, yet found, upon her going down, Mrs. Willis had waited breakfast for her some time.

As soon as the tea-equipage was removed, she retired to leave Mrs. Willis at liberty to go about her domestick affairs; and, when alone, was again assailed with all those cruel reflections which had almost incessantly filled her mind since her flight from her aunt. Among these, Miss Woodby's treachery suggested none of the least painful: she was ashamed of her credulity, of her ill-placed confidence; indignation for the shocking treatment she had met with from her succeeded. She was upon the point

of sitting down to write to her, and to express the deepest resentment of her malice and treachery; when, recollecting the extreme levity of that young woman's temper, her ridiculous affectation, her folly and insensibility, she thought it would ill become her to make serious remonstrances to one who only merited contempt; that, by taking no farther notice of her, that contempt would be best expressed, and her own consciousness of the part she had acted would account for it.

While she was thus ruminating, Mrs. Willis's maid introduced two porters bringing in a large trunk to her apartment. They delivered her the key sealed up, and a letter from Mr. Damer, in which he informed her, he would wait on her that afternoon.

She opened the trunk trembling; it contained all her cloaths, linen, and all the trinkets her aunt had given her. She searched eagerly in it to see if there was a letter for her; but finding none, she threw herself into a chair, and burst into a flood of tears.

While her aunt retained her cloaths, she had formed a feeble hope that she was anxious for her return, and would facilitate it, by assuring Mr. Damer, that she would no more press her to the hated marriage, nor think of confining her in a convent; but now what could she conclude, but that she had abandoned her for ever, and that a reconciliation was not to be expected? The most gloomy prospects offered themselves to her view, poverty, dependence, neglect; but, what was worse than all, the loss, perhaps, of reputation. How should she be able to excuse herself to the world for her late action; the world which judges actions only by their success: and when it beheld her unhappy and reduced to indigence, would not fail to conclude her guilty?

In these melancholy apprehensions did she wear away the hours till summoned to dinner by Mrs. Willis, who, with tender concern, perceived that she was afflicted, but would not discover that she perceived it; and used her utmost endeavours to amuse her, yet without any apparent solicitude, lest it should alarm her sensibility with a fear that her uneasiness was observed.

Mr. Damer came, according to his promise, in the afternoon: his arrival gave almost as much satisfaction to Mrs.

Willis, as to her fair anxious lodger, from a hope that it would produce some comfort to her. The young merchant instantly discovered that Henrietta had been weeping; and, as soon as Mrs. Willis withdrew, he tenderly approached her, and taking her hand, asked her if any thing new had happened to give her disturbance? Henrietta replied with a hasty question, 'Have you any message for me from my aunt, Sir?' 'I cannot say I have a message for you, Miss,' answered Mr. Damer; 'your aunt has indeed wrote to me.'— 'May I not see her letter?' asked Miss Courteney again, eagerly. 'To be sure,' said he, taking it out of his pocket, and presenting it to her, 'I wish it was conceived in more favourable terms.' Miss Courteney read it trembling, and found it as follows:

'SIR,
'I have given directions that every thing which belongs to that unhappy girl my niece should be sent to you, that, if you know where she is, they may be conveyed to her. She has, by her scandalously running away from me, ruined her own character, and brought aspersions upon mine; since even those who condemn her most, will likewise blame me, as if I had acted unkindly towards her.
'May the loss of my affection be the least of her misfortunes; though the worst that can possibly happen are likely to be the punishment of her ingratitude and folly.'

Henrietta returned the letter to Mr. Damer with a sigh. 'I have indeed,' said she, 'irrecoverably lost her affection; but, Sir, it is fit my aunt should know where I am, and that I solicited your protection as soon as I could. This will preserve me from some of those unfavourable suspicions which she mentions so severely. I will write to her instantly.'

'Oh! no, by no means,' said Mr. Damer; 'I think it will be best for me to make a visit to Lady Meadows, and tell her, that you are under my care, and that I have placed you here.'

'And will you take the trouble to go to Windsor, Sir?' said Miss Courteney, extremely delighted with this expectation.

'I would go any where,' said Mr. Damer, 'to serve you. Pray make yourself easy.'

'I shall be easier,' said Miss Courteney, 'when my aunt knows that this scandalous runaway is under proper protection, and is accountable for all her actions to your father. Perhaps she may relent when she is convinced I am not so indiscreet as she imagined, and that I had no other motive for leaving her but the fear of being confined in a convent. If you find my aunt absolutely resolved not to be reconciled to me, I must then consider how to dispose of myself in a way more suitable to my circumstances.'

'Remember, Miss,' said Mr. Damer, with some emotion, 'that you are under my care. I hope you will take no resolution without acquainting me.'— 'No, certainly,' replied Henrietta— 'but, Sir, I have no fortune; I am lodged, attended, and treated, as if I had a very considerable one. This expense I shall not be willing to support a great while longer; it will break in too much upon that trifling sum, which was put into your father's hands, for my brother's use as well as mine. Heaven knows,' said she, sighing, 'whether he is alive; if he is, he will probably need it; if he is not, it will go but a very little way in supporting me in the manner in which I now live.'

While Henrietta was speaking in this manner, Mr. Damer seemed ready to interrupt her several times, but checked himself as if upon better recollection. When she was silent, he walked about the room, musing; then suddenly turning towards her—

'These considerations, Madam,' said he, 'ought at least to be postponed till my father's return, and I think you may rely upon his prudence; he will certainly take care that your expences shall not exceed your income: in placing you here, I have done what I thought would be agreeable to him.'

Henrietta, observing that he was in some confusion, was concerned that she had spoke so freely, being apprehensive that he understood what she had said as a distrust of his prudence. She therefore told him, that if he found her aunt implacable, she would be extremely well satisfied to continue with Mrs. Willis

as long as Mr. Damer should think it necessary.

This assurance satisfied the young merchant, who left her with a promise to see Lady Meadows the next day, and to wait on her as soon as possible with an account of the success of his visit.

She passed this interval in a state of anxiety and suspense that doubled every hour. As soon as she saw Mr. Damer again, she endeavoured to read in his countenance, before he spoke, the news he had brought her.

'Well, Miss,' said he, 'I have seen your aunt.' He paused; and Henrietta, in a faltering accent, begged him to tell her, in one word, whether he had succeeded or not?

'Indeed I have not,' said he; 'Lady Meadows seems resolved never to forgive you for running away from her; but don't despair, my father may have more weight with her.'—'It is at least some comfort,' said she, 'that she knows I am under your protection.'—'I have a letter from my father,' said Mr. Damer; 'he has got the gout in his right hand; he dictated it to one of his clerks, and therefore speaks with reserve of you. He desires me to tell you, that he hopes to be in London in three weeks at farthest, when he will use his utmost endeavours to reconcile you to your aunt; and, in the mean time, recommends you most affectionately to my care.'

This account of her guardian's kind concern for her, gave some relief to the depressed spirits of Miss Courteney, who, although she had not flattered herself with any hope from the young merchant's mediation with her aunt, was as much shocked at the confirmation of her continued displeasure, as if she had not expected it. However, she expressed a grateful sense of his services, and disposed herself to wait with patience for the arrival of Mr. Damer, who alone could determine her destiny.

CHAP. XIV.

CONTAINING SEVERAL MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

HENRIETTA had been about a fortnight in the house of Mrs. Willis, whose good sense and polite behaviour

had entirely won her esteem, when, on a sudden, she became reserved and thoughtful, and often failed in those little attentions which mark respect, and an extreme willingness to oblige. She, who had avoided the least appearance of curiosity to know more of her affairs than what she pleased to disclose, now asked questions with an inquisitive air, and seemed to seek for occasions of collecting a fuller knowledge of her from her conversation.

Henrietta had insisted upon her being made acquainted with her true name and circumstances, from the time that Mr. Damer had acknowledged to her aunt that she was under his care, which had then produced no other alteration in Mrs. Willis than rather an increase of respect towards her, which she conceived due to her birth.

The young lady, whose extreme sensibility was not the least of her misfortunes, observed her increasing coldness, and suffered great uneasiness. She had willingly indulged a tenderness and esteem for her; and was concerned to find, from her altered behaviour, that either she had failed in her endeavours to acquire the friendship of Mrs. Willis, or that the woman whom she had conceived so good an opinion of, was in reality not deserving of hers.

However, she was determined not to let Mr. Damer perceive that she was dissatisfied with her behaviour; and she continued to live with her in the same easy manner as formerly, notwithstanding the coldness and constraint with which she was now treated.

Mr. Damer scarce ever failed to call and see her once a day; but one day he returned about an hour after he had been with her, and told her he had just received letters from his father, in which he acquainted him that Mrs. Willis would in a few days have several foreign merchants in her house, whom he had recommended to lodge with her; and that, his stay in Holland being protracted for some time longer, he thought it would not be proper for Miss Courteney to reside with Mrs. Willis till his return, as her house would be full of men.

'My father,' added Mr. Damer, 'desires me to ask you, Miss, whether you have any objection to go into the country for a few weeks. He has a distant relation, a widow, who lives
' at

‘at Hampstead, with whom he says he will be glad to find you at his return. He begs you will excuse his not writing to you, having the gout still in his hand; and desires me to assure you of his tenderest concern for your welfare.’

A week before, Henrietta would have thought it a misfortune to have left Mrs. Willis to go into any other lodging; but she was so piqued by her behaviour, that she heard this news without any uneasiness, and told Mr. Damer she would implicitly follow her guardian's directions.

He said he would conduct her to his cousin's himself; and took leave of her, after he had desired her to be ready for her little journey the next day.

Mrs. Willis came up to her apartment soon after Mr. Damer went away. ‘I hear I am soon to lose you, Miss,’ said she, entering. ‘Yes,’ replied Miss Courteney coolly, ‘such is my guardian's pleasure; but,’ added she, smiling, ‘you will not miss me; you will have other company.’—‘Other company!’ repeated Mrs. Willis.

‘Mr. Damer tells me,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘that your house will be full soon; some gentlemen recommended by his father will be here.’

‘It is strange,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘that I should know nothing of it. Have you had a letter from your guardian, Madam?’

‘No,’ replied Miss Courteney; ‘but his son has heard from him. But,’ pursued she, after a little pause, ‘it is strange, as you say, that you should not know you are to have new lodgers.’

Mrs. Willis looked at her attentively, as she spoke these words: ‘May I ask you, Miss,’ said she, ‘the cause of your sudden removal?’

‘I know of none,’ replied Miss Courteney; ‘but that, my guardian thinks it will not be proper for me to stay among so many gentlemen as will shortly be your lodgers.’

‘I wish there had been a better reason than that,’ said Mrs. Willis; ‘for I am very sure I am to have no lodgers recommended by the elder Mr. Damer, otherwise I should have known it.’

‘Has not his son told you so?’ asked Miss Courteney, in great confusion of thought.

‘He told me nothing,’ replied Mrs. Willis, ‘but that you are to leave me to-morrow.’

‘Lord bless me!’ cried the young lady, in great emotion, ‘what can this mean!’

‘Suffer me,’ said Mrs. Willis, looking on her with tenderness and concern, ‘to ask you a few questions: when you know my motives, I am sure you will not think that it is an impertinent curiosity which makes me take this liberty, but my anxiety for you.’

‘Dear Madam,’ interrupted Miss Courteney, ‘ask me what you please: you alarm me excessively.’

‘I would not alarm you,’ said Mrs. Willis; ‘but I will own to you that I have fears; nay, more, that I have had doubts; but I see I have been to blame with regard to the latter. Has Mr. Damer shewn you his father's letters, Miss?’

‘Shewn them to me!’ repeated Henrietta, ‘no—but sure—dear Mrs. Willis, explain yourself—I am ready to sink with the apprehensions you have raised in my mind.’

‘Compose yourself, my dear,’ said Mrs. Willis, drawing her chair nearer to her, and taking her hand tenderly. ‘I mean you well; be assured I do: and now I will tell you all that has been upon my mind for several days past. Never did I imagine that I should entertain unfavourable suspicions of the son of my benefactor; but indeed, my dear Miss, I am afraid he has not acted ingenuously with you.’

That moment a loud knocking at the door interrupted Mrs. Willis. She started from her chair. ‘Who can this be?’ said she, in some surprize; ‘I will go and see.’ She ran hastily out of the room; but returning again instantly, ‘Possibly,’ said she, ‘it may be Mr. Damer: remember, Miss, that it is my advice to you, not to leave my house, if he should desire you, at least till you have heard what I have to say.’

She uttered these words with extreme earnestness and concern, and went immediately down stairs, leaving Henrietta in an agony of doubt, anxiety, and astonishment.

Her surprize kept her motionless in her chair, till she was roused by the voice of a woman upon the stairs that led to her apartment, whom she heard say, with great

great haughtiness of accent—'No, there is no occasion for that ceremony; I shall go in without introduction, I assure you.'

She suddenly started from her chair, and was going towards the door, when she saw it flung open with some violence, and a lady of a very disagreeable figure, but richly dressed, and in the utmost extremity of the fashion, appear at the entrance.

Miss Courteney, recovering a little from her surprise, looked at the lady, in order to recollect whether she had ever seen her before; but, being wholly unacquainted with her features, and observing that she stood still and gazed at her without speaking, she concluded the visit could not be designed for her.

'I fancy, Madam,' said she, approaching her, 'you are mistaken; I am not the person you seek.'

'No, Madam,' returned the lady with an emphasis, 'I am not mistaken; then throwing herself haughtily into a chair, 'I shall not ask your leave,' said she, with a malignant smile, 'to sit down in this apartment; I may take that liberty with what belongs to Mr. Damer. Do you know me, pray, Madam?'

'Not I, truly,' replied Miss Courteney, indignation at this insolent treatment having banished her former terror and surprise; and seating herself, with a careless air, just opposite to her, 'Pray let me know what is your business with me,' said she.

'Pert creature!' said the stranger, affecting contempt, while her lips quivered with rage, and her whole frame seemed convulsed with the violence of her emotions: 'What! you would have me understand you to be a woman of fortune, would you not? Upon my word,' said she, looking round her, 'this is a very handsome apartment. Your dressing-room, forsooth! You have your forms, no doubt, and receive company in your dressing-room in a morning. A very genteel dishabille, too; and your face varnished over so nicely! Who would not conclude that white and red to be natural?'

'You are come here to insult me, I find,' said Henrietta, her fine face glowing with indignation. 'I cannot imagine what cause I have given you for this strange rudeness. I never, as I can remember, saw you before; and

insult upon your quitting my apartment. You can have no business with me, I am sure.'

'Indeed but I have, minx,' said the stranger, with the pale rage of a fury; 'and my business is to turn you out of this apartment: my fortune shall not be wasted in supporting such wretches.'

'Your fortune!' cried Miss Courteney, in astonishment: 'what have I to do with you, or your fortune? Who are you?'

This moment Mrs. Willis entered the room: 'Excuse me, ladies,' said she; 'I heard high words between you.'

'Ladies!' interrupted the stranger: 'how dare you, woman, join me with such a creature! What business have you to intrude?'

'Madam,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'I came to inform this young lady, my boarder, who you are: she does not know you.—Miss, this is young Mr. Damer's lady.'

'What!' cried Henrietta, in the utmost astonishment, 'is Mr. Damer married?'

'Oh—you are surprized, then,' said the lady, with a sneer: 'disappointed too, perhaps. You had the confidence, I suppose, to think he would have married you one of these days! Tell me, you wicked thing, did he ever give you such hopes? Oh, I could tear his eyes out!' said she, rising, and walking about the room like one frantick, while the enormous length of her negligee swept the room, like the train of a tragedy-queen. 'A wretch, to use me thus! Me, who have brought him such a fortune!—But I'll be revenged: he shall never have a quiet moment; I'll make him know what it is to slight a woman of virtue.'

All this time Henrietta continued silent, rooted in her chair, and with difficulty restrained the anguish of her heart from rising to her eyes, lest this outrageous woman of virtue should exult in her distress: yet she saw that she was betrayed; that Mr. Damer had acted weakly, if not basely: her reputation was ruined, yet she would not stoop so low as to enter into any justification of herself to a woman who had treated her so cruelly, upon a bare suspicion. The pride of affronted virtue came to her aid, against that torrent of overwhelming grief which had for some moments absorbed

forbed all her faculties: she rose from her chair, and approaching Mrs. Damer—

‘The error you are in,’ said she, ‘would have moved my compassion, had you treated me with less insolence. I scorn to undeceive you. Go, learn from your husband who I am; and blush, if you can, for the injurious language you have given a person as much your superior by birth, as in that virtue perhaps of which you boast, and which has not withheld you from such indecent transports of jealousy, as it would become a virtuous woman to suppress.’

The superiority with which she spoke, the dignity of her air and manner, struck her mean-souled adversary with such awe, that she continued silent for some moments, with her haggard looks fixed on her. Envy, at the view of so lovely a form, added new stings to her rage and jealousy. At length, she poured forth a torrent of reproaches, with such eagerness of malice, that her words were scarce intelligible.

‘I am not used to scolding,’ said Miss Courteney, calmly, retiring towards her bed-chamber; ‘and you, Mrs. Damer, seem to be an excellent scold.’

The lady, provoked at this appellation, employed the coarsest language imaginable to express her resentment of the injury; but Miss Courteney took shelter in her bed-chamber, the door of which she double-locked.

‘Insolent trollop!’ said Mrs. Damer, raising her voice that she might hear her; ‘call me scold! I scorn your words, you saucy, impudent, audacious hussy: I never could scold in my life—no, you dirty puss—I am a woman of breeding; I am none of your beggarly quality: I had forty thousand pounds to my portion, you proud, paltry minx.—Scold! call me a scold—’

‘Pray, Madam, compose yourself,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘and do me the favour to walk down into my parlour. Here is some mistake. I am pretty certain you have injured this young lady by your suspicions.’

‘Young lady!’ interrupted Mrs. Damer, ‘what makes her a lady?—A fine world it is, now-a-days, when beggars are called ladies. I would fain know what fortune she has to put her upon a footing with ladies.’

‘I know nothing of her fortune,’ Madam,’ said Mrs. Willis.

‘Fortune! poor wretch!’ said Mrs. Damer: ‘a few paltry hundreds. Such ladies! Suppose her grandfather was an earl, has she a fortune? Answer me that.’

‘I don’t know, really,’ replied Mrs. Willis. ‘Well, then,’ said Mrs. Damer, ‘why do you give her a title she has no right to?—But why do I talk to you, vile wretch? you are my husband’s confident.’

This thought renewed all her rage, and she loaded Mrs. Willis with such shocking investives, that the poor woman could not refrain from tears.

‘Your husband’s father, Madam,’ said she, ‘has been a generous benefactor to me: I consider that, and will be patient under your abuse.’

The word *abuse* was such a charge upon this lady’s want of breeding, that she called Mrs. Willis a hundred saucy jades, for daring to say that she was capable of abusing any body; and having almost exhausted her spirits with the violence of her passions, and finding that Mrs. Willis sat silent, and took no farther notice of what she said, she flounced out of the room, declaring, that her father-in-law should know that she acted as procuress for his son, and that she should return to her rags and poverty again.

Mrs. Willis thought her behaviour dispensed with her from treating her with that respect which she would have otherwise paid to Mr. Damer’s daughter-in-law, and therefore did not offer to wait on her down stairs, but rung the bell for somebody to attend her; and, locking the door after her, she tapped gently at Miss Courteney’s chamber-door, telling her that Mrs. Damer was gone.

‘Who is this fury?’ said the young lady, as she came out. ‘You have been treated very ill by her, Mrs. Willis; I am sorry for it.’—‘And I am sorry for what you have suffered, my dear Miss,’ replied Mrs. Willis; ‘but Mr. Damer is to blame for it all. I am now sure you are entirely innocent.’

‘Innocent!’ repeated Miss Courteney, with a sigh. ‘How low am I fallen, when that could ever be doubted! But, Mrs. Willis, you knew, it seems, that Mr. Damer was married; I am surprized you never mentioned his wife to me.’

‘And

‘And are you not surprized, Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘that Mr. Damer never mentioned her to you?’

‘To be sure that is very strange,’ replied Henrietta; ‘what could he mean by it?’

‘Ah! Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘a very little reflection on Mr. Damer’s behaviour might have informed you that he is in love with you.’

‘In love with me!’ cried Henrietta, blushing with shame and resentment.

‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘in love with you; if that can be called love which seeks the ruin of it’s object. I saw it in his looks, his words, cautious as they were; his whole behaviour shewed it but too plainly.’

‘And this man married too!’ cried Henrietta, lifting up her eyes. ‘To what have I, by one rash step, reduced myself! But still, Mrs. Willis, my first difficulty recurs, why did you avoid speaking of his wife to me?’

‘Hear me, my dear, with patience,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis: ‘I shall be very free; but my plainness ought not to offend you, since it is a mark of my sincerity.’ Mrs. Willis paused here a moment, and then proceeded, as will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. XV.

IN WHICH THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE PARTLY EXPLAINED.

‘YOU may remember I told you,’ soon after you came here, that before I went to Leghorn, I heard Mr. Damer was courting the daughter of a rich citizen: I had been returned but three or four days, when he came to me to know if I could accommodate a young lady, a ward of his father’s, with lodging and board; to which I readily consented.

‘It is no flattery, Miss, to tell you that, when I saw you, I was charmed with your person and behaviour: your beauty, and Mr. Damer’s extreme assiduity, made it seem highly probable that he loved you. I set myself to examine his behaviour, and the observations I made on it confirmed my suspicions. I had then heard nothing of his being married, having upon my return been so taken up with my domestic affairs, that I had no leisure

to make or receive visits, from which I could receive any information concerning what had happened in my absence.

‘I was a little surprized to find that you had been introduced to me under a feigned name, and that you were not called Benson, but Courteney. However, I made no reflections upon that circumstance, till, about two days afterwards, I accidentally heard that Mr. Damer had been married two months; then it was that, in my astonishment at his so cautiously avoiding any mention of his wife, I was led to reflect upon what you yourself had informed me of your situation; your flight from your friends, Mr. Damer’s apparent tenderness for you, awakened suspicions, I own it, disadvantageous to you.

‘I waited impatiently for the hour of Mr. Damer’s visiting you, and the moment I saw him, wished him joy on his marriage, expressing my surprize that I should not have heard of that event from himself. He coloured, and seemed in great confusion; and, after a little pause—“Have you said any thing of it to Miss Courteney?” said he.

‘I replied, that I had heard the news but an hour before, and had not seen you since.

“You will oblige me,” said he, “if you will not mention it to her.” I stared. “My wife,” continued he, “is the most unreasonable woman in the world; she has taken it into her head to be horribly jealous of me, though we have been married so short a time. It was a match (and he sighed) of my father’s making—but I assure you I am very unhappy.”

“I am sorry for it, Sir,” interrupted I; “but what reasons have you for concealing from Miss Courteney that you are married?”

“It is a sad thing, Mrs. Willis,” said he, “when a man is not master in his own family.”—“I hope that is not your case, Sir,” answered I. “Indeed but it is,” he replied. “Miss Courteney, you know, is agreeable.”—“Oh! very agreeable,” said I. “My wife is of such an unaccountable humour,” resumed he, “that I durst not offer Miss Courteney, though my father is her guardian, an asylum in my house, till her relations were re-

"conciled to her, lest I should be teased with jealousy and suspicions."

"I am persuaded, Sir," said I, "that Miss Courteney has too much good sense to take it amiss that you did not invite her to your house, as things were circumstanced. She has more reason to be displeased at your concealing your marriage from her, which every body knows, and which she would soon know if she lived less retired."

"Let me entreat you, Mrs. Willis," said he, "not to mention it to Miss Courteney. I would not upon any account that she should know I am married, yet could not offer her an apartment in my house."

"Indeed, Sir," said I, smiling, "you make this matter of more consequence than you need to do; Miss Courteney will not consider it as any slight to her."

"She must either think herself slighted," resumed he, with quickness, "by my not inviting her, or she will divine the reason, which would be worse; for in that case her delicacy is so extreme, that she would never allow me to see her."

"Ah," thought I, "is it so!" He perceived he had almost betrayed himself; and changed the discourse, asking me many questions about my husband, whose diligence and fidelity he highly extolled, dropping hints of designs in his favour; and indeed it is in his power to be of great service to him.

"But I had no satisfaction," pursued Mrs. Willis, "in what he said; for, to my apprehension, it appeared as if he sought to bribe me into a concurrence with his designs, whatever they were. Therefore I sat silent, and I believe discovered by my looks, that I did not like his proceedings; for he rose up, and, with an air of some resentment, said,

"That his father would be in town in a few days, and would then dispose of you properly; and that in the mean time he must insist upon my being silent with regard to his marriage, since it would throw him into great confusion if you knew it; and added, that he thought he might reasonably expect this instance of my complaisance."

"I told him that I was very glad to hear his father would be in town so

soon, and would take the young lady under his own care: that, since he desired it, I would not be the first to acquaint you with his marriage. I owned his reasons appeared to me very whimsical; but that it was not my business to be impertinently curious; and that I should concern myself no farther about it."

"He seemed pleased with this indifference, and went up stairs to see you. I had already taken my resolution, my dear Miss Courteney, which was to write to his father, and acquaint him with the whole transaction. I was willing to leave the young gentleman in a false security, that he might not suspect my design, and take measures to render it useless; and not being sure how far even you might be trusted, for my suspicions of you, though weakened, were not yet removed, I thought it best to say nothing that could alarm you, till I had received the old gentleman's advice how to act; but my measures were broke by Mr. Damer's resolving to take you from my house."

"He came into the parlour to me to-day, before you saw him, and told me, that he had directions from his father to send you into the country, because he did not expect to return for some time yet, and he did not approve of your residing in London till he came."

"You may easily imagine, Miss, that I was not satisfied with the cause he assigned for this sudden resolution. I was now alarmed for you; and judged it necessary to acquaint you immediately with Mr. Damer's being married, that you might not fall ignorantly into his snares. I began with asking you questions, to which the openness and simplicity of your answers convinced me that you were imposed upon greatly by Mr. Damer. I was going to explain myself clearly, when Mrs. Damer's arrival interrupted me. You know with what earnestness I intreated you not to leave my house; I was apprehensive, that he was come to hurry you away, and I trembled for the danger to which you were exposed."

"When I left you, I met Mrs. Damer upon the stairs; and, not knowing her, I asked who it was she desired to see?—"The young woman that lodges with you," said she, in a

tone

‘tone of voice that surprized me. I told her, I would go and acquaint you that there was a lady wanted to speak to you: but she rushed by me, saying, “There is no need of that ceremony, I shall introduce myself.”’

‘Her behaviour recalling to my mind what Mr. Damer had said of his wife’s jealousy, I suspected this was the lady; and, to be assured, I enquired of a servant, who attended her, who she was. The moment I knew it was really her, I flew up stairs, being full of concern for you; for I saw a storm in her countenance, and dreaded the consequence. The poor young man is indeed plagued with a jealous wife; and in that particular he told the truth. But, my dear Miss, I see plainly that the mystery he has made of his connections with you has roused her suspicions.’

‘It is all an incomprehensible mystery to me,’ said Henrietta, sighing: ‘Mr. Damer has certainly deceived me, for what purposes I know not; but I know that I will never see him again, but in the presence of his father, to have this dark affair cleared up.’

‘But, my dear Mrs. Willis, how shall I express what my heart feels for you, who have shewn so tender a regard for my honour and quiet! How miserable might I have been, had you been less good! I am sure I may rely upon your prudence. Advise me, then, what to do: you know my story; you see my present situation. I have no friend, no protector.’

‘My dear Miss,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis, ‘there is but one thing for you to do, and that is, to return to your aunt.’

‘How can I appear before her,’ said Henrietta, ‘after having so greatly obliged her by my flight; a flight which has had such disgraceful consequences? Besides, do not the same motives that obliged me to leave her, still subsist? and are they not equally strong against my returning?’

‘I would not pain you, my dear Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘with the recollection of a past error, were it not to make it useful to you in your present circumstances. Warned as you were of your aunt’s designs, it was impossible to carry them into execution without your concurrence: your flight therefore was not necessary; and, if

‘not necessary, surely it was highly imprudent; and, in my opinion, can only be repaired by a voluntary return. Need I tell a young lady of your delicacy, that imputations, however unjust, fully, if they do not stain a character? Do you think this woman’s frantick jealousy will be silent? How can you otherwise prove the falshood of her assertions, than by returning to your aunt, and making yourself accountable to her for all your actions? Nothing can be more unfortunate for youth and beauty, than to be left to its own guidance and discretion. The world seldom attributes too much prudence to youth: however regular our conduct may be in that gay time of life, it is supposed to be owing to the care and attention of our parents or relations, rather than to our own circumspection. Can a young woman, who voluntarily sets herself free from that restraint, hope to escape unfavourable censures, when those who owe it to chance only that they are not subjected to any controul, suffer perhaps in the opinion of the world, because they are possessed of a liberty which they may make an improper use of?’

‘You see, my dear, to what inconveniencies you have been exposed; these are the necessary consequences of your unprotected state: there is no doubt but you would repel every attempt to the prejudice of your honour; but does not modesty, if not virtue, suffer by such attempts? and can you acquit yourself of imprudence, when you reflect that you have thrown yourself into a situation which renders you liable to them?’

‘It was indeed,’ said Henrietta, who, by her blushes and confusion, acknowledged the strength of her reasons, ‘imprudence to throw myself into this situation, but it would be guilt to continue in it. Oh! that I had had such a friend as you to advise with at Windsor, I should never have taken a step, which I blush to think of now. I will return to my aunt, Mrs. Willis; I will throw myself upon her mercy; and if I must be made a sacrifice of—’

‘Indeed, my dear,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis, ‘these fears are groundless: you cannot possibly be married against your own consent; and you have it always in your power to refuse. As for the convent, you cannot be cheated into

'it, that is certain, since you know she had such a design, and may guard against it.'

'But suppose,' said Miss Courteney, 'that she should not receive me again? Mr. Damer found her inexorable.'

'Ah! my dear,' replied Mrs. Willis, shaking her head, 'Mr. Damer was not a fit person to be trusted with such a negotiation: but, however that may be, I am sure, when your aunt knows in what manner he has acted, and the reasons you have to distrust him, she will think it necessary to take you out of his hands. Your return to her will remove her suspicions against you, and convince her that it was from a sudden impulse of fear only, that you left her; and that you had no desire of disposing of yourself contrary to her inclinations.'

'But I have one favour to beg of you,' said Miss Courteney, 'and that is, that you will go along with me to my aunt; resentment may shut her ears to all that I can say to her, but I think she cannot resist your pleas, urged with that good sense you possess in so high a degree.'

'Doubt not, my dear,' said Mrs. Willis, 'but I am ready to do you any service in my power.'

'What hinders us then from going directly?' cried Henrietta, eagerly, 'we can get a post-chaise, and—'

'The day is too far advanced,' replied Mrs. Willis; 'we will, if you please, set out early to-morrow morning; I will take care to have a post-chaise in readiness: in the mean time, you may depend upon being secure from any disagreeable visits here; neither Mr. Damer nor his fury of a wife shall see you, unless you desire they should.'

'Notwithstanding the treatment she gave me,' said Miss Courteney, 'I would rather see her than him; but you may well imagine, Mrs. Willis, that I do not wish to see either of them.'

'Make yourself easy, my dear,' said Mrs. Willis; 'you shall meet with no insult of any kind in my house.'

Henrietta embraced her with tears of gratitude, which the good woman returned with true maternal tenderness, and then left her, to give the necessary directions for their little journey the next day.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.